Shojo Beat Manga

We Were There 8

Story & Art by
Yuki Obata

Shojo Beat

We Were There 8
Yuki Obata

viz media

I don't know if I'm following my fate...

...or going against it.

But there is one thing I want, and that is for Yano's wish to come true.

8 Story & Art by Yuki Obata

The award-winning series known in Japan as *Bokura ga Ita*

www.shojobeat.com

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This book reads from right to left.

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RATED T+ FOR OLDER TEEN
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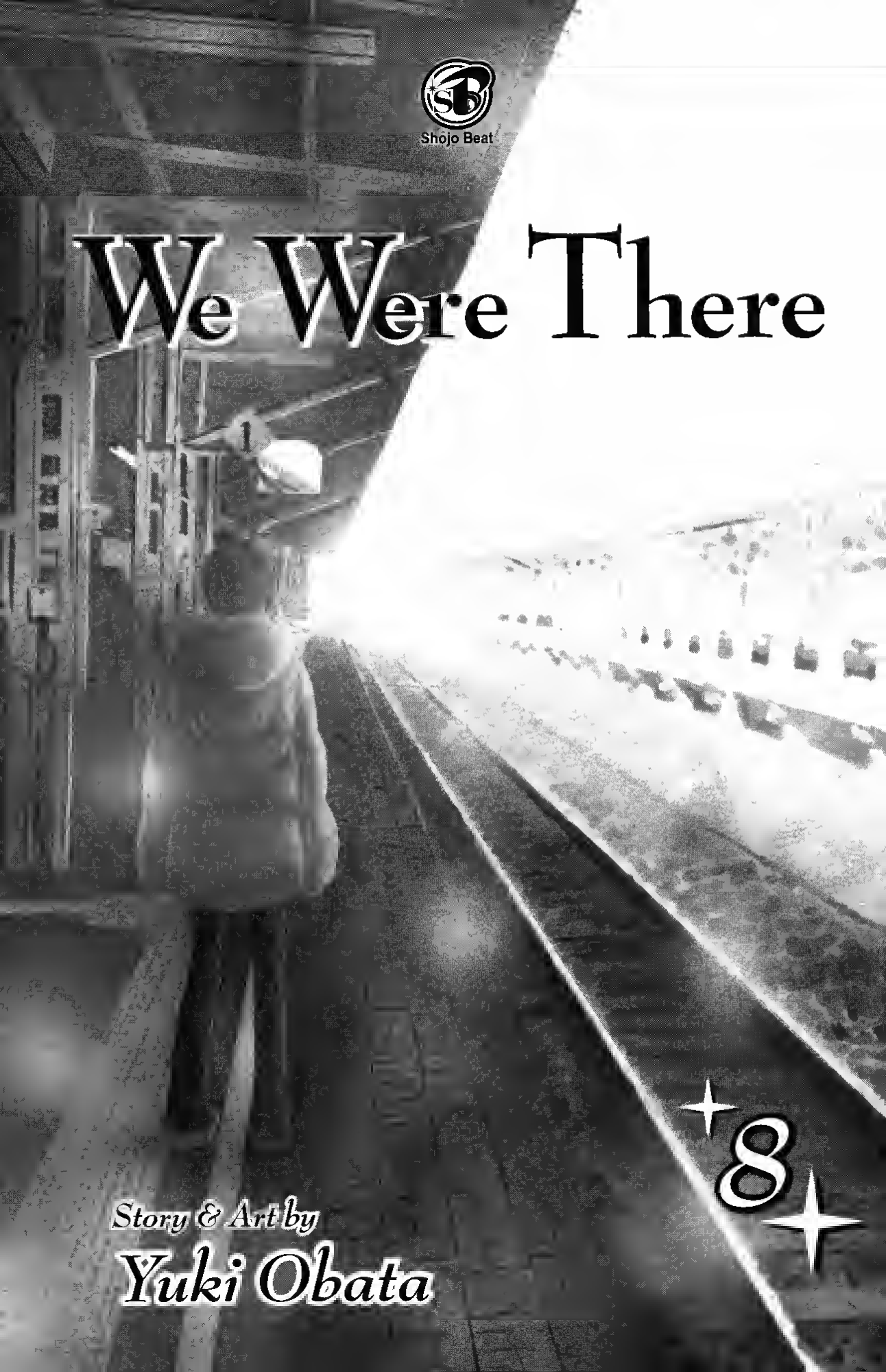
Shojo Beat
We Were There
8
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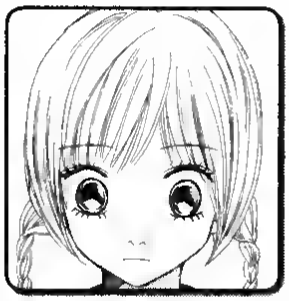
Characters

Masafumi Takeuchi
Yano's childhood friend. He's kinder and more modest than Yano.



Nanami Takahashi
She's earnest but a bit forgetful at times.

Motoharu Yano
Nanami's popular classmate. His girlfriend Nana-san died.

Story

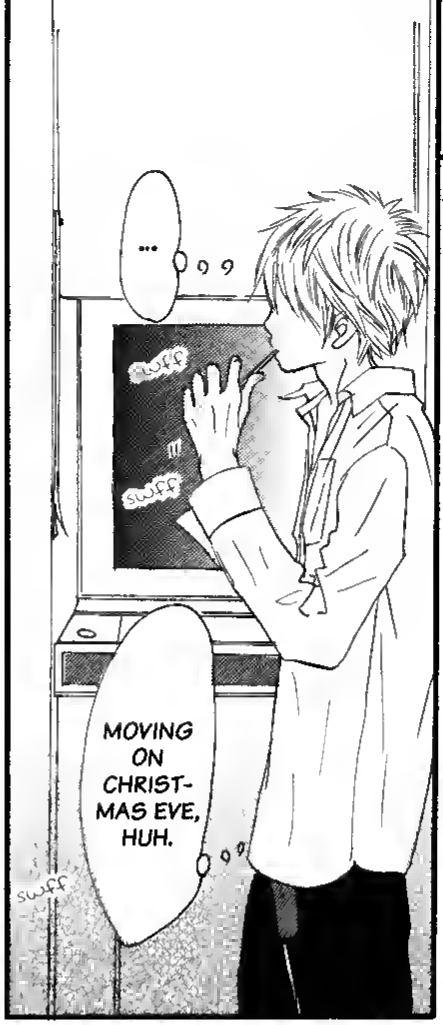
Yano did not show up for his date with Nanami. Instead he was with Yuri, to the shock and dismay of Nanami. Seeing Nanami in despair, Takeuchi finally tells her his feelings for her. And just when it looks like Nanami and Yano's relationship couldn't get any more difficult, Yano's mother decides to get a divorce and move...

Chapter 28

NANA...
YOU NEED TO HURRY AND MAKE UP WITH YANO.
WHAT?
IT'S CHRISTMAS NEXT MONTH.
...
12
S M T W T F S
1 2 3 4
5 6 7 8 9 10 11
12 13 14 15 16 17 18
19 20 21 22 23 24 25
26 27 28 29 30 31
BEFORE I KNEW IT...
AH...
I SHOULD START SAVING UP SO I CAN BUY HIM SOMETHING.
What are you going to get him?
IT TURNS OUT...
We have found bleeding from the intestine as a result of the cancer screening test the other day. Please go to the general hospital for a checkup immediately.
Municipal Cancer
Tel
...I'M STILL INTERESTED IN CHRISTMAS EVEN THOUGH WE'RE IN A FIGHT.
...THE YEAR WAS ALREADY DRAWING TO A CLOSE.

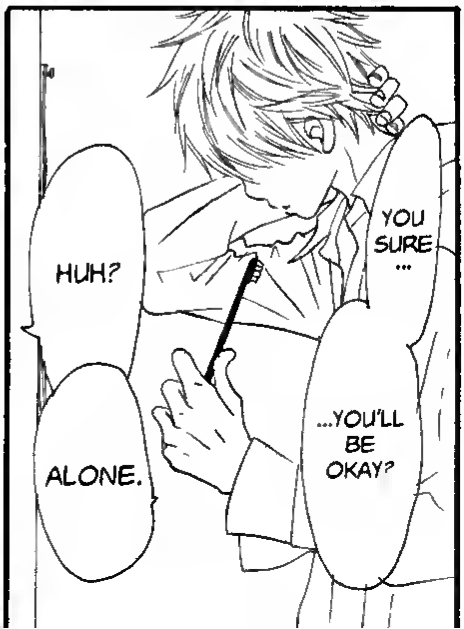
MOM ...
THERE'S A POSTCARD FROM THE HOSPITAL FOR YOU...
HAVE YOU READ IT?
OH!
THAT.
I GOT THE SAME ONE LAST YEAR TOO.
REMEMBER WHEN I WENT FOR A CHECKUP? THEY FOUND SOME BENIGN POLYPS ...
...AND I HAD A COUPLE OF THEM REMOVED.
THIS IS THE ONE THEY DIDN'T REMOVE IN THE LAST OPERATION.
DOMP
THEY SAID IT WAS TOO SMALL TO REMOVE.
IT'S PROBABLY BLEEDING FROM THERE AGAIN.
OH, OKAY.
Phew
BUT... SHOULDN'T YOU GO JUST IN CASE?
Uhh... This is tiring
Poff
Poff
-3
I GUESS I SHOULD.
BUT I'M TOO BUSY WITH THE MOVE.
I'LL GET A CHECKUP ONCE I'M IN TOKYO.

fri
3
10
17
24
31



12

thu	fri	sat
2	3	4
9	10	11
16	17	18
23	24	25
30	31	



Net pay:
¥200,000
HOW MUCH ARE LIVING EXPENSES AND RENT?
...
If I scrimp,
¥120,000.
shff
shff
¥60,000 per month, which includes your school expenses and whatnot.
WHAT ABOUT THINGS LIKE HEALTH CARE AND PROP-ERTY TAX?
He says I don't have to pay for your other living expenses, so all I need to pay is ¥30,000 per month.
...MY ALLOW-ANCE...
AND...

YOU'RE GOING UNDER!!
What do you mean, all you need to pay?!
I'LL BE FINE.
I'VE GOT SAVINGS OF MY OWN...
...AND I'LL WORK PART-TIME TOO, SO...
SHUP
YOU HAVE TO CONCEN-TRATE ON UNI-VERSITY EN-TRANCE EXAMS.
I WILL FIND A WAY TO MAKE MORE MONEY...
...AND IT'S NOT LIKE I'M GOING TO RUN OUT OF IT IMMEDIATELY.
I CAN...
...WORK PART-TIME...
...SO FORGET ABOUT MY ALLOW-ANCE
ABSO-LUTELY NOT!
BUT YOU SHOULDN'T USE YOUR SAVINGS.
I CAN PAY FOR MY SCHOOL EXPENSES MYSELF.

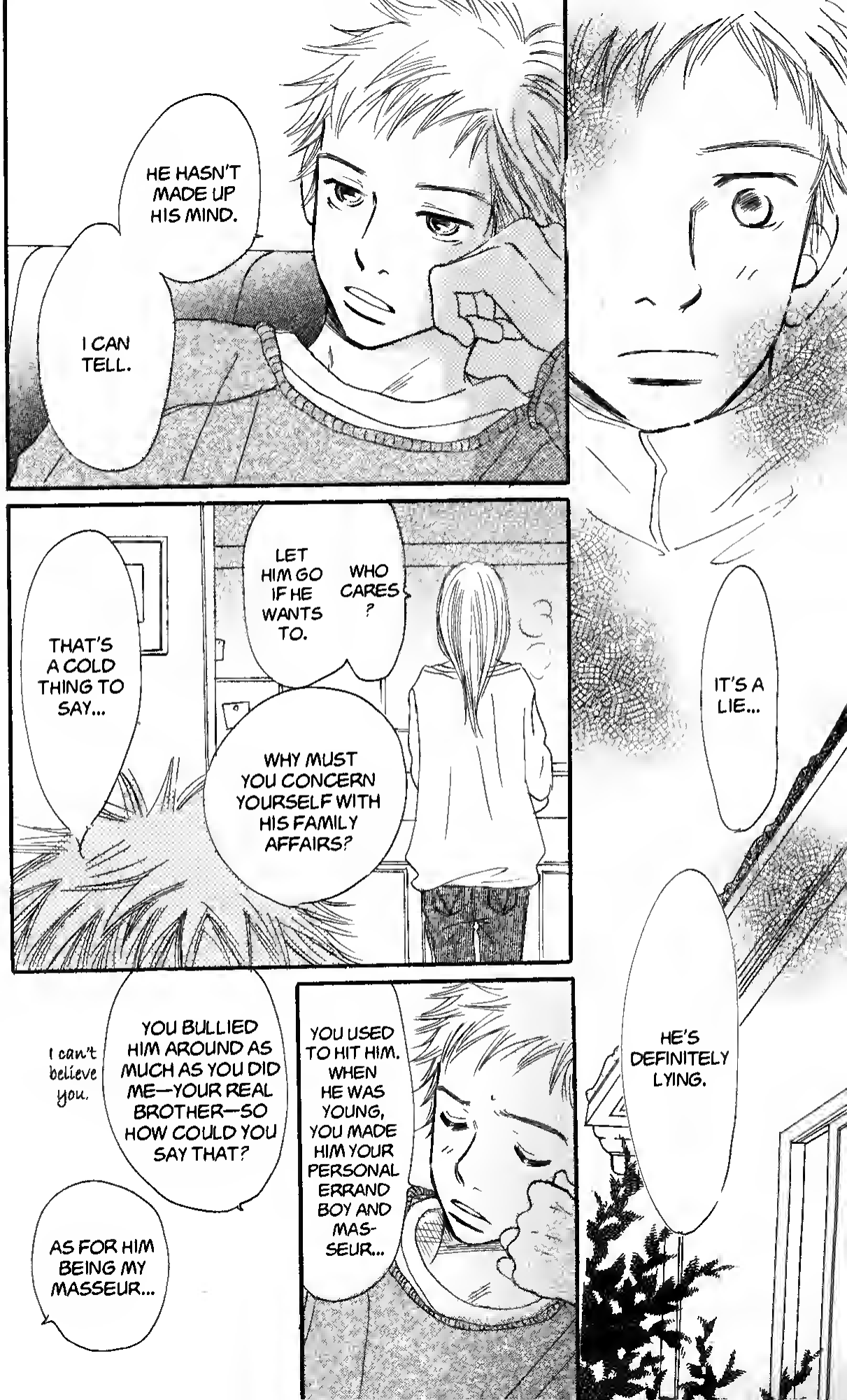
PLEASE...
...LET ME TAKE CARE OF MYSELF.
YOU DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT ANYTHING.
DON'T BE STUPID.
AND IF YOU FAIL THE ENTRANCE EXAMS...
...IT'S ALL MEANING-LESS ANYWAY.
I'M ALREADY WORRIED ENOUGH LEAVING YOU HERE WHERE I CAN'T KEEP AN EYE ON YOU...
...SO PLEASE DON'T GET ANY IDEAS ABOUT DOING PART-TIME JOBS OR THE LIKE.
flup
PART-TIME JOBS
2004

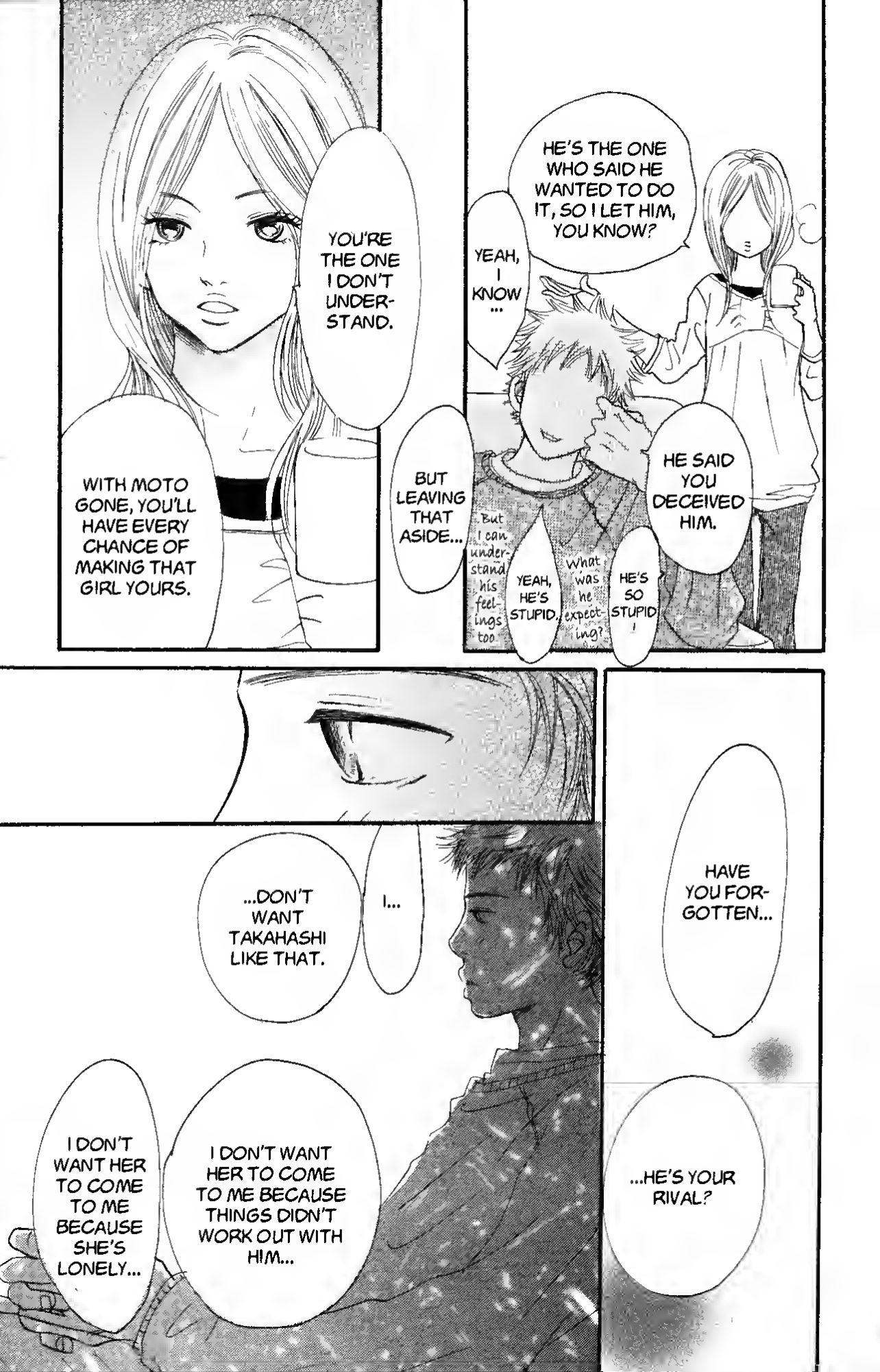
YOUR MOTHER IS AGAINST IT, RIGHT?
YOU SHOULDN'T.
...
JOB OPENINGS
SHUK
I GET HOW YOU FEEL, BUT...
"NOT WORRYING YOUR MOM" IS ALSO A FORM OF FILIAL PIETY, RIGHT?

THEN THAT MEANS...
"BEING WHERE MY MOM CAN KEEP AN EYE ON ME" IS THE GREATEST FILIAL PIETY, ISN'T IT?
flup
UH.
HEY...
MY DAD IS GOING TO NEED PEOPLE TO HELP OUT IN DECEMBER, SO I'M SURE THE STORE WILL HAVE OPENINGS, YOU KNOW?
I CAN ASK HIM.
HE'LL PROBABLY PAY YOU WELL...
HEY!
WAIT UP, MOTO.
HEY!
HEY.
YOU'RE NOT...
WHAT DO YOU...
... THINK ?

THE OTHER DAY...
...YOU SAID YOU WOULDN'T LEAVE TAKAHASHI BEHIND, REMEMBER?!
YOU'RE NOT...
...GOING TO GO LIVE WITH YOUR MOM, ARE YOU?
...WOULD I GIVE YOU A CHANCE WITH HER?!
WHY IN THE WORLD...
OF COURSE I WON'T!

WOMEN ...
...JUST DISAPPEAR TO WHO KNOWS WHERE IF YOU'RE NOT ALWAYS WITH THEM.
I DON'T WANT ANY MORE REGRETS.
WE'VE GOT ENOUGH PROBLEMS AS IT IS...
AND SHE'S THE KIND OF GIRL WHO GETS ALARMED OVER THE SMALLEST THINGS...
SO IF I TOLD HER I'M MOVING TO TOKYO...
IF I TOLD HER I WAS GOING TO LEAVE HER...
...SHE'D NEVER BE ABLE TO BEAR IT, WOULD SHE?


HE HASN'T MADE UP HIS MIND.
I CAN TELL.
IT'S A LIE...
HE'S DEFINITELY LYING.
LET HIM GO IF HE WANTS TO.
WHO CARES?
THAT'S A COLD THING TO SAY...
WHY MUST YOU CONCERN YOURSELF WITH HIS FAMILY AFFAIRS?
I can't believe you.
YOU BULLIED HIM AROUND AS MUCH AS YOU DID ME—YOUR REAL BROTHER—SO HOW COULD YOU SAY THAT?
YOU USED TO HIT HIM. WHEN HE WAS YOUNG, YOU MADE HIM YOUR PERSONAL ERRAND BOY AND MASSEUR...
AS FOR HIM BEING MY MASSEUR...


YOU'RE THE ONE I DON'T UNDER-STAND.
WITH MOTO GONE, YOU'LL HAVE EVERY CHANCE OF MAKING THAT GIRL YOURS.
HE'S THE ONE WHO SAID HE WANTED TO DO IT, SO I LET HIM, YOU KNOW?
YEAH, I KNOW ...
BUT LEAVING THAT ASIDE...
But I can understand his feelings too
YEAH, HE'S STUPID.
What was he expecting?
HE'S SO STUPID!
HE SAID YOU DECEIVED HIM.
HAVE YOU FOR-GOTTEN...
I...
...DON'T WANT TAKAHASHI LIKE THAT.
I DON'T WANT HER TO COME TO ME BECAUSE SHE'S LONELY...
I DON'T WANT HER TO COME TO ME BECAUSE THINGS DIDN'T WORK OUT WITH HIM...
...HE'S YOUR RIVAL?

HMM?
OH?
WHAT'S THIS?
I WANT TAKAHASHI TO CHOOSE ME OVER HIM.
OH.
MOTO IS MOVING TO TOKYO.
HEY!
DON'T MAKE THINGS UP.
I THOUGHT HE WOULD.
Ayaka, make me a cup of tea too.
...
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
OH.
YOU KNOW...
THAT BOY'S MOTHER...
...IS AN ETHEREAL BEING.
She's never been practical, you know.
SHE'S LIKE A YOUNG GIRL WHO GREW UP ONLY IN SIZE TO BECOME AN ADULT.
I'VE ALWAYS BEEN ENVIOUS OF THAT.
Thanks
BUT MOTO IS PRETTY MATURE FOR BEING HER SON, ISN'T HE?
YES.
HE'S A GOOD EXAMPLE OF HOW MATURE A CHILD BECOMES IF THE PARENT IS UNSTABLE.

OH?
FROM WHAT I'VE HEARD, SHE WAS A LOT LIKE THAT TOO—JUST LIKE HIS MOM.
LIKE HIS MOM?
WHO WAS?
HIS DEAD GIRLFRIEND.
WOMEN...
...JUST DISAPPEAR TO WHO KNOWS WHERE IF YOU'RE NOT ALWAYS WITH THEM.
DAMN IT.
HE REALLY MIGHT...

huff
huff
...MOVE TO TOKYO.
IT'S COLD OUT. COME ON IN...
TAKEUCHI-KUN...
What's wrong?
YOU'VE GOT TO MAKE UP WITH HIM NOW TO STOP HIM FROM GOING TO TOKYO!
...
WHAT ...?
TOKYO?
YOU TWO CAN'T BE SO WEAK-WILLED.
WHAT THE HELL IS THAT?
LIKE HOW IT WON'T WORK OUT IF HE LEAVES.
THIS ISN'T THE TIME TO BE INSE-CURE.

ENDING IT IS UP TO YOU...
...BUT THIS ISN'T THE WAY TO DO IT.
ANYWAY, JUST GO TALK TO HIM!
YANO...
...IS LEAVING?

mrmr

YANO...

mrmr

BUT...

LET ME SEE IT!

WHY...

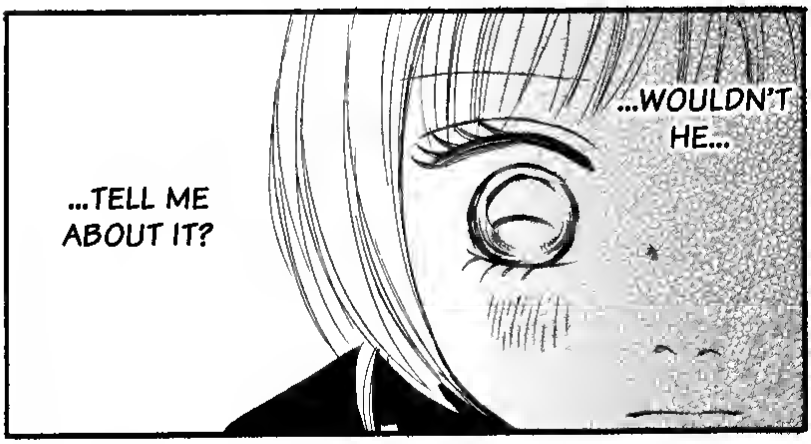
SUCH AN IMPORTANT THING...

COLLEGE OF CHOI

College Nam

First Choice

Second ce



ond Choice

K University

Name

Departm

Economics Department

Second Year, Class 7 , Motohar

K UNIVER-SITY?

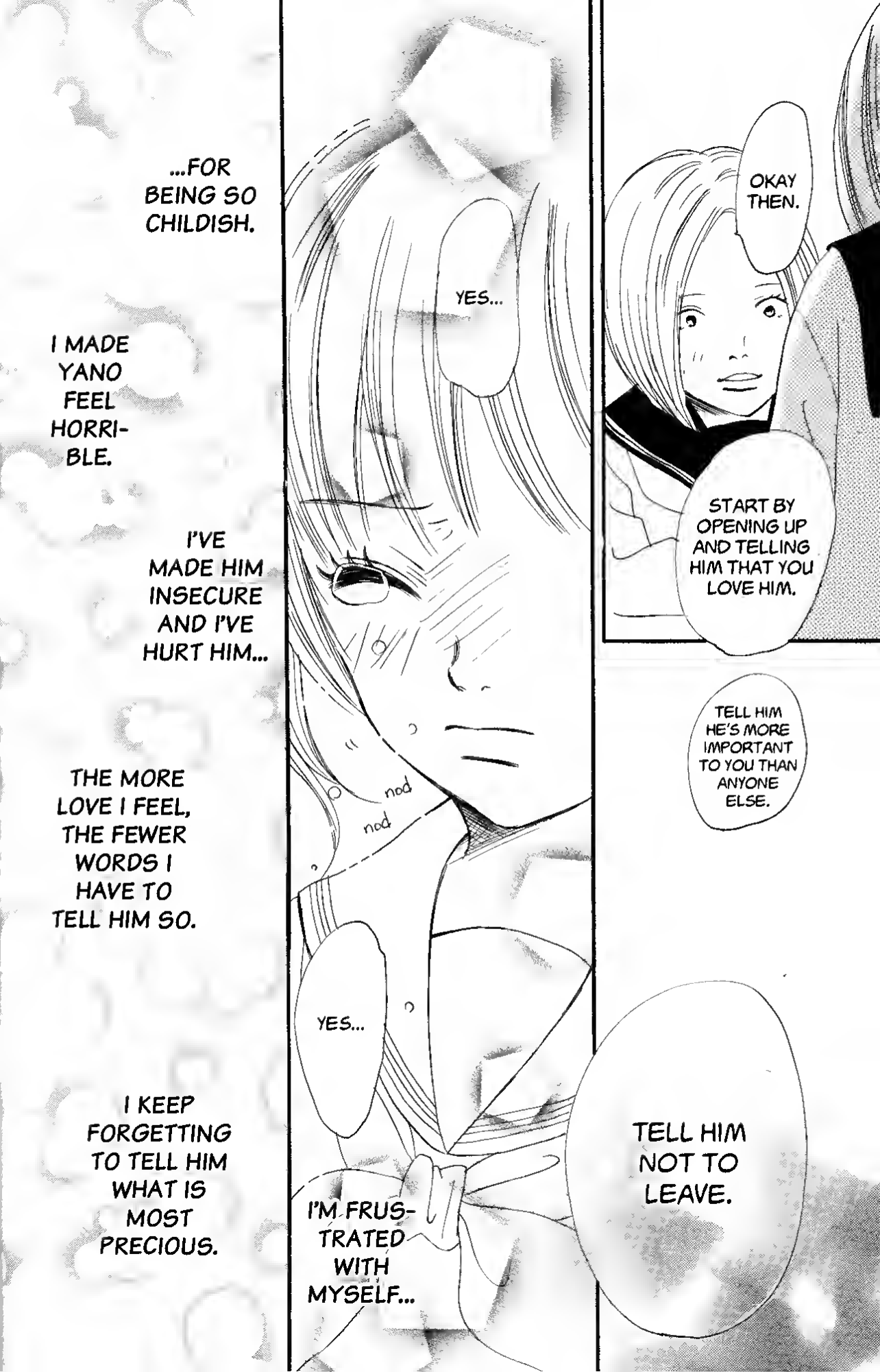
TOKYO, HUH...
I want Sapporo.
HALF THE CLASS IS APPLYING OUTSIDE OF HOKKAIDO.
OH...?
WHAT'S YOUR SECOND CHOICE?
I DON'T HAVE ONE.
THIS IS THE ONLY PLACE I WANT TO GO TO.
THAT'S BOLD.
AND IF YOU DON'T GET IN?
THAT WON'T HAPPEN.
...
HEY...
SQUINT
WHEN I TALKED WITH HER ABOUT COL-LEGE A WHILE AGO...
...I REMEMBER HER TELLING ME THAT SHE'D APPLY FOR AT LEAST ONE SCHOOL IN TOKYO.
But now I'm not so sure.
IF SHE'S GOING TO COLLEGE IN TOKYO...
...THEN I CAN PERSUADE HER THAT WE'LL ONLY BE APART FOR ONE YEAR...
CAN YOU READ HERS?
NOPE.
HUH?

...
WHAT AM I THINK-ING?
I'M NOT...
?
JUST ASK HER.
YEAH...
TAKAHASHI.
WHICH SCHOOLS ...
...ARE YOU APPLYING TO?
...
ISN'T THERE...
...SOME-THING MORE IMPOR-TANT...
...TO TELL ME?

...
RIGHT?
BUT YOU WERE GOING TO TRY TO CONVINCE THEM...
YOU SAID THERE WEREN'T MANY COLLEGES IN HOKKAIDO THAT INTERESTED YOU.
UM...
BEFORE YOU SAID YOUR PARENTS ARE AGAINST YOU GOING TO A COLLEGE IN TOKYO, RIGHT?
...SO I'M GUESSING YOU'RE AIMING FOR A FANCY CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, HUH.
AND YOU LIKE BRAND NAMES...
...
YOU SAID YOU WERE ...
...INTERESTED IN ENGLISH LIT.
...YOU'RE GOOD IN ENGLISH...
AND...
SO...
...IT'S SOMETHING LIKE M COLLEGE (TOKYO), R UNIVERSITY (TOKYO), OR S COLLEGE (TOKYO), RIGHT?

YANO...
I...
...CHANGED MY COLLEGE CHOICES.
RIGHT?
WRONG.
...
COULDN'T YOU CONVINCE YOUR PARENTS?
HUH?
...ASK ME FOR HELP?
WHY DIDN'T YOU...
BUT YOU DIDN'T TELL ME ANYTHING EITHER...

SO YOU'RE NOT CHOOSING A COLLEGE IN TOKYO...
I GUESS YOU'RE HAPPY TO BE APART FROM ME.
YANO?!
I WANT TO TELL HIM I LOVE HIM...
...BUT I'M NOT SURE HOW YANO FEELS ANYMORE.
SO YOU KEEP TESTING HIM, HUH.
YES.
I KEEP SAYING THE OPPOSITE.
YOU'RE WORRIED BECAUSE YOU LOVE HIM, RIGHT?
YES...
...I LOVE HIM?
WHY CAN'T I...
...JUST TELL HIM...


...FOR BEING SO CHILDISH.
I MADE YANO FEEL HORRI-BLE.
I'VE MADE HIM INSECURE AND I'VE HURT HIM...
THE MORE LOVE I FEEL, THE FEWER WORDS I HAVE TO TELL HIM SO.
I KEEP FORGETTING TO TELL HIM WHAT IS MOST PRECIOUS.
YES...
nod
nod
YES...
I'M FRUS-TRATED WITH MYSELF...
TELL HIM NOT TO LEAVE.
TELL HIM HE'S MORE IMPORTANT TO YOU THAN ANYONE ELSE.
OKAY THEN.
START BY OPENING UP AND TELLING HIM THAT YOU LOVE HIM.

...
UM.
I'M SORRY TO DROP BY SO LATE...
...BUT IT'S URGENT...
"NO, YANO..."
THINGS LIKE... "I'M THE ONE WHO'S MOST AT FAULT."
"I DON'T WANT YOU TO GO."
DING DONG
tink
HERE.
I MUST SPEAK TO YANO ABOUT SOMETHING.

HE SHOULD BE BACK SOON.
OH...
SORRY.
YES.
HE'S NOT HERE...
BOOKS
CLOTHES
DO YOU LIKE SWEET POTATO CAKES?
...SO I CAN'T MEET...
...HIS MOTHER'S GAZE.
UM.
THANK YOU.
I CAME HERE TO STOP YANO FROM LEAVING...
I MADE THEM MYSELF.
Notes
FORGIVE ME.
OH?
THIS IS...

Motoharu,
Rules I want you to follow:
.Do not sleep away from h
.Try to eat as much as y
can at home.
.When you're out of n
.When you feel sick
.No part-time jobs
IF YOU DON'T WRITE EVERYTHING DOWN FOR THEM...
...MEN HAVE NO CLUE WHERE TO FIND THINGS IN THE HOUSE.
Auto-with
from bank accou
gas, water bills
Kerosene — Get Mori Gas Station to
check every month
in the room at the far
f the second flo
HELLO...
WOOF
WOOF
chak
THERE HE IS.
AH.

I'M SORRY...
...FOR NOT NOTICING SOMETHING WAS GOING ON WITH YOU.
YANO...
I HEARD YOUR MOTHER IS GOING TO GET A DIVORCE.
I'VE BEEN SO SELF-AB-SORBED ...
...I DIDN'T REALIZE YOU WERE DEBATING WHETHER TO GO.
THERE'S NOTHING TO DEBATE.
I'M NOT LEAVING YOU, TAKAHASHI.

...OVER LITTLE THINGS...
YANO...
I'VE BEEN...
GETTING UPSET AND WORRIED...
...WALLOWING IN HAPPINESS.
IT'S JUST A LUXURIOUS DISTRESS I CAN REVEL IN BECAUSE WE'RE SO CLOSE.
BUT IF YOU LEAVE...
I WON'T EVEN BE ALLOWED THAT.
I WANT YOU TO KNOW...
...THAT I REALLY LOVE YOU, YANO.

I REALLY, REALLY...
...LOVE YOU TOO, TAKAHASHI.
I KNOW...
I CAN UNDER-STAND HIM.
...WHAT YANO IS FEELING.
IF I OPEN UP...
THERE.
THAT'S WHY...
...I CAN REALLY HEAR HIM.
SEE.
...I'LL NEVER LEAVE YOU.

SO I CAN SAY IT.

YANO.
I'LL UNDER-STAND...
...IF YOU NEED TO GO WITH YOUR MOTHER.

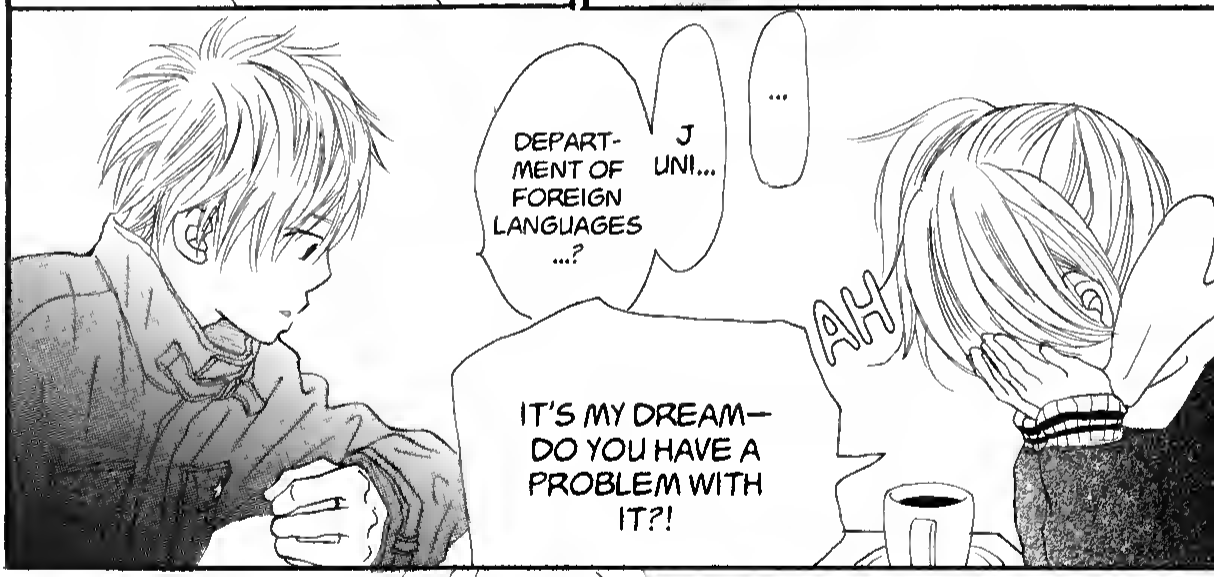
DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME.
THINK REALLY CARE-FULLY.
I'LL BE FINE.
NO MATTER WHICH YOU CHOOSE...
...I'LL STILL BE WAITING FOR YOU.
I'M NOT GOING TO LEAVE YOU THAT EASILY.
I'M NOT LIKE...
...NANA-SAN.
THE MOST IMPORTANT THING RIGHT NOW IS...
...WHAT YOU REALLY WANT TO DO, YANO.

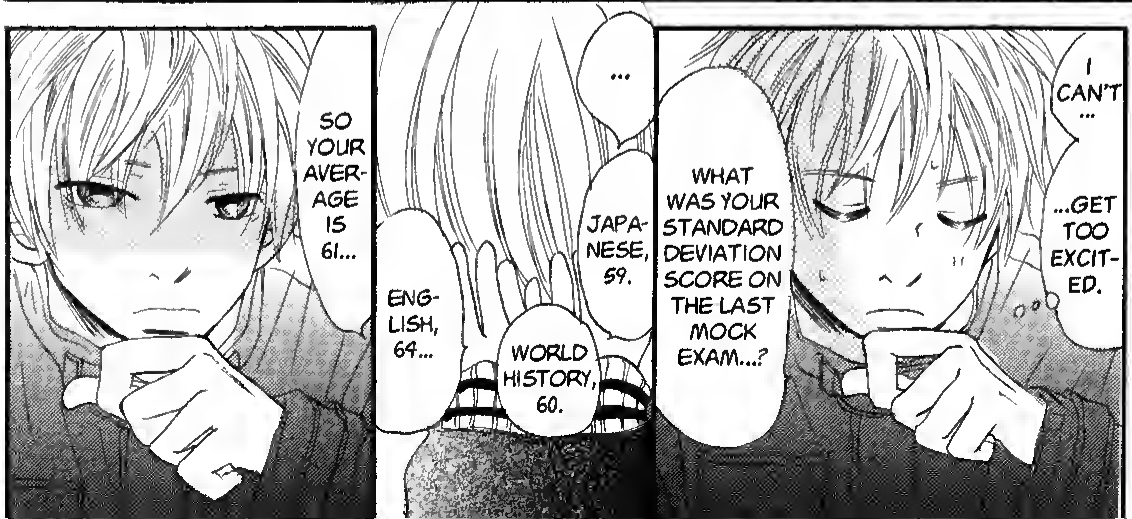
...I'M GOING TO TRUST HIM.
BUT...
LET'S TALK ABOUT A YEAR FROM NOW.
SO FOR NOW...
JUST THINK ABOUT WHAT IS BEST, YANO.
BUT YOU SAID YOU CHANGED YOUR CHOICE.
They said I can apply for one college away from home.
I'VE BEEN ABLE TO CONVINCE MY PARENTS.
JUST IN CASE ...
...
IT'S IN TOKYO, RIGHT?
Department
NO MATTER WHAT HIS DECISION IS...

COLLEGE OF CHOICE

	College Name	Department/ Division
First Choice	J University	Department of Foreign Language English Division
Second Choice	F Women's College	Department of English Literature

Second year, Class 7 Nanami Takahash





YOU KNOW ...
...IF YOU DON'T GET IN, YOU'LL END UP IN SAPPORO, RIGHT?
...
TO BE BLUNT ...
IT WOULD BE HARD TO GET ACCEPTED THERE EVEN IF YOUR DEVIATION SCORE WAS OVER 70.
EH? I'M SURPRISED IT'S EVEN 10%...
I HAVE A 10% CHANCE ...
I KNOW.
THEN YOU'LL APPLY SOMEWHERE ELSE?
NO...
THEN MAYBE APPLY FOR ANOTHER ONE IN TOKYO TO BE ON THE SAFE SIDE?
MY PARENTS WON'T LET ME.
TAKAHASHI.
IF YOU FAIL...
IT'S SAPPORO.
DO YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT THAT MEANS?

YANO...
I'M NOT APPLYING IN TOKYO FOR YOU, YANO.
IT'S FOR ME.
I JUST HOPE MY PATH...
...WILL CROSS YOURS SOME-WHERE.
THAT'S WHAT I TRULY HOPE.

I'VE STILL GOT A YEAR...
I...
SO...
IT'LL BE FINE.
RIGHT ?!
sob sob
...
She's trying to convince herself.
YEAH...
First Choice
Second Choice
It's also reckless, but...
IT'S GOOD TO AIM HIGH.
BUT A YEAR IS MORE THAN ENOUGH TIME TO CREATE A MIRACLE.
I'm going to convince myself too.
Uh-huh.
Uh-huh.
...
OKAY.
I'M GOING TO GET IN...
...AND GO TO TOKYO WITH YOU.

YOU'LL ABSOLUTELY GET IN.
YES.
1ST J UNIVERSI
ND F WOMF

URFF.
...
UH.
SORRY.
YOU'RE BEING RUDE.
BUT...
I DIDN'T KNOW TAKAHASHI WAS A GAMBLER.
Why'd she do that?
THERE'S A HUGE GAP BETWEEN HER FIRST AND SECOND CHOICES...
I WAS A BIT SHOCKED WHEN SHE SAID SHE WASN'T APPLYING TO A TOKYO UNIVERSITY FOR ME...
BUT WHEN SHE SAID HER CHOICE WAS FOR HERSELF...
...THAT SHE WAS PURSUING WHAT SHE WANTED...
SHE'S REALLY...
...A RESPON-SIBLE...
...PERSON.

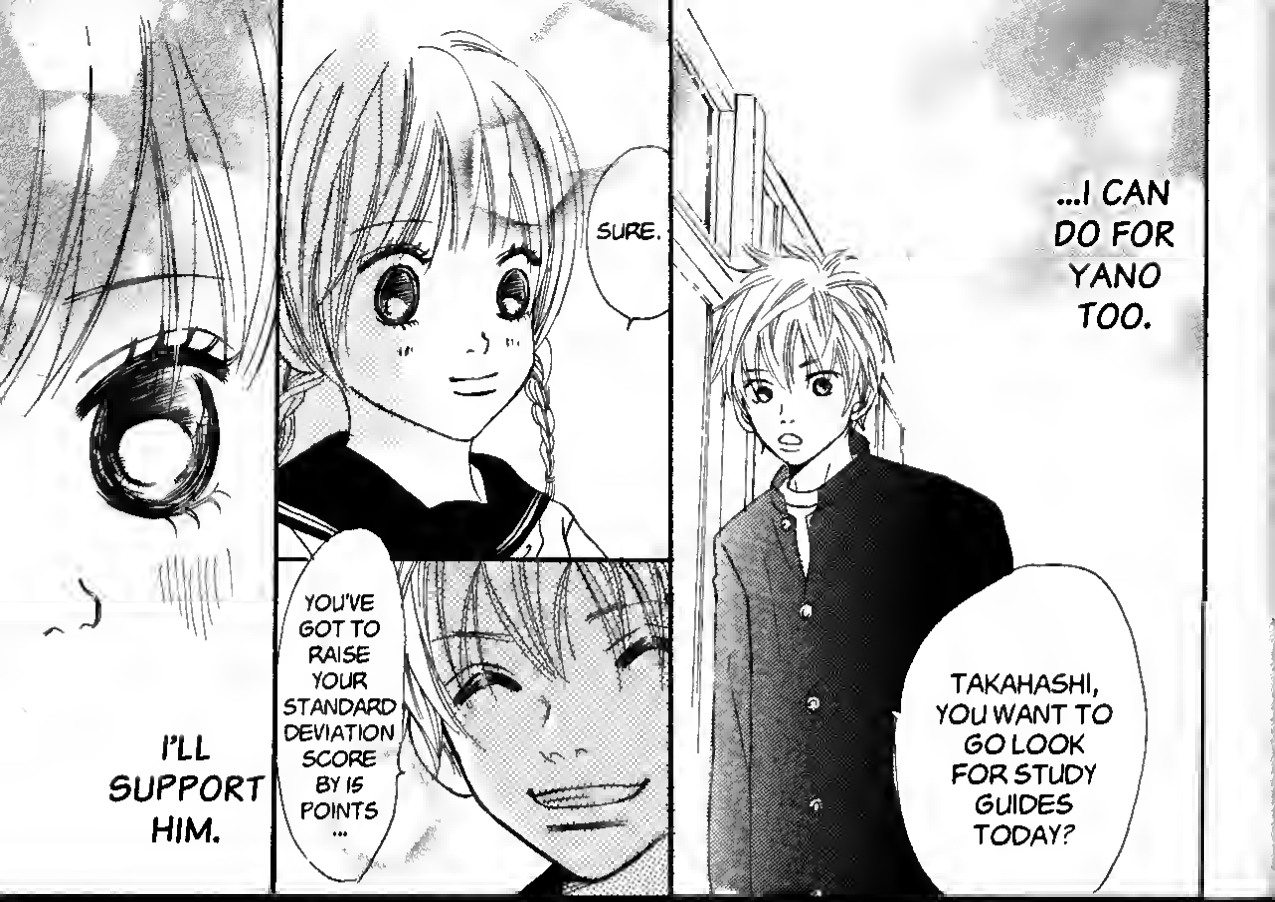
SO I FEEL I CAN DEPEND ON HER.
TAKAHASHI MAY BE ABLE TO CREATE A MIRACLE.
THEN YOU'RE A GAMBLER TOO.
BUT DON'T LET THAT AFFECT YOU.
SO...
HAVE YOU DECIDED YET?
NO.
THEN I'LL ALSO...
...TRUST YOUR CHOICE.
I THINK I'VE BEEN THE ONE ACTING LIKE A WEAK GIRL.
TAKA-HASHI IS...
... STRONG, ISN'T SHE?

AT ANY RATE, I'M ON THE TOKYO TEAM TOO.
YOU'RE APPLYING FOR W UNIVERSITY'S POLITICAL ECONOMICS DEPART-MENT, RIGHT?
YEAH.
BUT TO BE HONEST ...
...WHAT IS SHE GOING TO DO IF SHE FAILS?
IS SHE REALLY GOING TO STAY IN SAPPORO?
I'D BE BUMMED ...
...TOO.
MRR
I BET SHE HASN'T EVEN THOUGHT ...
...ABOUT WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF SHE DOESN'T GET IN.
I know her.
Yeah.
SHE'S THE KIND OF PERSON WHO JUST CONTINUES ON SINGLE-MINDEDLY.
DOESN'T SHE NEED TO LOOK OVER HER SHOULDER SOMETIMES?
HMM...
BUT...
SHE'LL BE OKAY.
I'LL WATCH HER BACK.

I'M GOING TO BE A LITTLE MORE CAUTIOUS.
skrtch
skrtch
HUH?
SHMP
SHMP
GAMBLING IS ALL WELL AND GOOD, BUT...
DON'T TELL...
...TAKAHASHI ABOUT THIS.

THIS IS PROBABLY THE FIRST TIME IN MY LIFE...
...I HAVE INSURANCE.

HEY...
THOSE ARE CONFI-DENTIAL!
AH!
SORRY!!
College Name
First Choice
K University
Second Choice
H University
Second Year, Class 7
Motoharu
UM.
I...
YES?
IS APPLYING FOR BOTH A PRIVATE AND PUBLIC UNIVERSITY OKAY?
HM...
H UNIVERSITY...
IT'S NOT A PROBLEM IF THE STUDENT IS VERY SMART...
THAT'S IN SAPPORO.
BUT IT'S DEFINITELY MORE ADVANTA-GEOUS IF YOU SELECT ONLY ONE.
YEAH, I FIGURED THAT.
THERE'S SOME-THING...


...I CAN DO FOR YANO TOO.
TAKAHASHI, YOU WANT TO GO LOOK FOR STUDY GUIDES TODAY?
SURE.
YOU'VE GOT TO RAISE YOUR STANDARD DEVIATION SCORE BY 15 POINTS ...
I'LL SUPPORT HIM.

NO MATTER WHAT HE CHOOSES.

HE MIGHT BE HAVING SECOND THOUGHTS.
J... J...
UM.
MAYBE HE HASN'T MADE UP HIS MIND...
HERE.
THANKS.
I'M A BIT SCARED.
I HEARD THE ENGLISH SECTION IS REALLY TOUGH.
It's a large part of the exam
SHOW ME.
flup flup
SINCE HE HASN'T TOLD ME YET, HE PROBABLY IS STILL THINKING ABOUT IT.
YANO HASN'T BROUGHT UP WHETHER HE'S MOVING TO TOKYO WITH HIS MOM SINCE THAT DAY.
THE OFFICIAL GUIDE ISN'T OUT YET...
LET'S TAKE A QUICK LOOK THROUGH THE PREVIOUS EXAMS.

Chapter 29

CHRISTMAS IS DECISION DAY.
WHAT?
IF YANO IS MOVING, HE'LL LEAVE ON THE 24TH, RIGHT?
HASN'T HE TOLD YOU HIS DECISION?
...
TAKAHASHI, IF YOU GET ACCEPTED, I'LL HOLD YOU IN VERY HIGH ESTEEM.
...
THEN YOU'D BETTER GET READY TO.
EVEN IF HE DOES MOVE, WE'LL ONLY BE APART A YEAR...
AND...
...SO I CAN HANDLE IT.
ENGLISH VOCABULARY 10,000
I'M THE ONE WHO TOLD HIM HE COULD GO.
SO I HAVE TO TRUST HIM.
ARE YOU OKAY WITH THIS?
BUT IT'S ALMOST DECEMBER!
NO.
BUT...

YOU NEED TO WORK ON YOUR READING COMPREHENSION OF LONG SENTENCES, RIGHT?
LET'S SEE ...
YES.
IT'S NOT LIKE HE'S CHOSEN TO MOVE YET.
AND...
IT'S ONLY FOR A YEAR.
THAT'S RIGHT.
SORRY ...
I PEEKED AT YOUR COLLEGE APPLICATION LIST.
...
HM?
YANO...?
YOU DON'T NEED TO APPLY TO H UNIVERSITY.
APPLYING FOR BOTH A PUBLIC AND A PRIVATE COLLEGE ...
YOU'LL BE SO BUSY THAT YOU'LL FAIL BOTH ENTRANCE EXAMS.
IT'S FINE!
JUST CONCENTRATE ON YOURSELF, TAKAHASHI...
...AND DO ALL YOU CAN.

DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME.
UN-FAIR!
I AM?
YOU'RE SO UNFAIR!
ALWAYS...
HE HAS SUCH A TIGHT HOLD ON MY HEART.
BUT IT'S FRUS-TRATING...
KRRK
BATH-ROOM BREAK.
OKAY.
SO I REALLY HAVE TO GET ACCEPTED AT J UNIVERSITY.

MMBL
ENGLISH IDIOMS 3,000
NO GOOFING OFF.
I WONDER...
UH.
I'M STUDY-ING!
TAKA-HASHI.

...HOW LONG A YEAR WOULD FEEL...
...IF WE WERE APART.
THE WEATHER HAS GOTTEN COLDER ALL OF A SUDDEN.
REALLY?
IT'S THE SAME, ISN'T IT?
MAYBE IT IS.
HOW COME YOUR HAND...
...IS ALWAYS SO WARM, YANO?
IT'S THE RE-VERSE...
HUH?
BE-CAUSE I'VE GOT A WARM HEART...
...
THEN HOW COME YOUR HAND...
...IS ALWAYS SO COLD?
BE-CAUSE I'VE GOT A WARM HEART.
HA HA HA.
WHY ARE YOU LAUGH-ING?

HEY.
I WANT TO SHOW YOU SOME-THING.
EH?
THE OTHER DAY I SAW SOMETHING THAT LOOKS SO MUCH LIKE YOU...
IT'S PROB-ABLY ...
...SOME-THING LIKE THIS AGAIN.
A puppy.
His eyes... ...are widely spaced...
IT'S CUTE.
YOU WANT IT?
IT'S OKAY ...
IT'S A WASTE OF MONEY.
I COULD GET IT WITH ONE TRY.
come on...

...FEELING THE WARMTH OF YANO'S HAND...
BUT NOW...
THAT'S WHAT I PROMISED.
NO MATTER WHICH YANO CHOOSES, I'LL TRUST HIM.
I VOWED IT TO MYSELF.
I'LL SUPPORT HIS DECISION.
...I'M STARTING TO HAVE SECOND THOUGHTS.

THIS ISN'T LIKE YOU.
YOU'VE BEEN MULLING IT OVER FOREVER, BUT YOU STILL HAVEN'T DECIDED.
WELL...
hup
YOU KNOW ...
NO MATTER WHICH YOU CHOOSE, YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE REGRETS.
IN OTHER WORDS...
HEY!
IT DOESN'T REALLY MAKE A DIFFER-ENCE...
...WHICH YOU CHOOSE, RIGHT?

YOU KNOW...
...SHE DOESN'T COMPLAIN VERY OFTEN, RIGHT?
AND IN MOST SITUA-TIONS...
...SHE ACTS REALLY MATURE.
...TAKAHASHI HAS TO HOLD BACK.
THE LONGER YOU TAKE, THE HARDER IT WILL BE FOR TAKAHASHI.
...BUT IF YOU'RE PLANNING TO GO, YOU NEED TO TELL HER SO.
I KNOW IT'S CRUEL...
BECAUSE IT'S JUST ME AND MY MOM NOW...

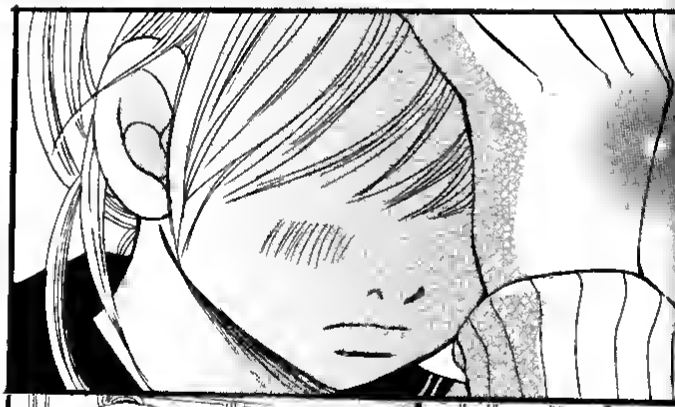
YOU KNOW...
...IT'S WEIRD, ISN'T IT?
SHE'S 42. SHE'S NOT A CHILD, BUT SHE'S NOT AN ADULT EITHER.
I CAN'T LEAVE HER ALONE.
AND IT'S ONLY FOR A YEAR.
SHE GOT MARRIED ON HER OWN...
...GOT DIVORCED ON HER OWN...
...AND SHE FOUND AN EXCITING JOB.
SHE COMPLETELY IGNORED THE FACT THAT HER SON NEEDS TO PREPARE FOR COLLEGE ENTRANCE EXAMS.
COULDN'T HE...
...EVEN WAIT ONE YEAR BEFORE GETTING DIVORCED?
klink
klink
WOOF
WOOF
YOUR MOM DIDN'T ASK YOU TO GO WITH HER, DID SHE?
SO I CHOOSE TO HEAR...
...MY MOM'S SILENT PLEA TO GO WITH HER...
...AND PRETEND LIKE I DON'T NOTICE...
...TAKAHASHI'S PLEA TO STAY BEHIND?

AND IS TAKAHASHI...
...REALLY SO STRONG?
THAT'S CRUEL.
...BECAUSE YOU THINK TAKAHASHI MIGHT START TO REGRET WHAT SHE SAID?
ARE YOU WAITING...
YOU HAVEN'T MADE A DECISION YET BECAUSE—
UM...
...TO GIVE TAKAHASHI TIME, ARE YOU?
...YOU'RE NOT DOING THIS...

HAPPY
CHRISTM
LOVEY-DOV
EXCIT-ING!
THIS YEAR'S PLAN
B-BUMP
ENJOY A WONDERFUL CHRISTMAS EVE!!
...
IF TAKAHASHI TOLD ME NOT TO GO...
...I PROBABLY WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO.
TAKA-HASHI.
OH!
YES?
FUMA
YOU WANT TO GO TO THE LI-BRARY TODAY?
OH, UM, I'VE GOT A MEETING...
...SO GO ON HOME.
It'll take time.

JUST IN CASE...
...I'LL GET HIS PRESENT EARLY THIS YEAR.
CHRISTMAS EDITION
...
OH?
?
WHAT?
I SEE.
SO YOU WANT TO CHANGE IT.
...
I BROUGHT THE DAILY LOG.
THANKS.
OH.
EH...
DON'T FORGET TO TELL YOUR PARENTS, OKAY?

THE CLOSING CEREMONY...
IT'S DECEMBER 24TH, AS USUAL.
Huh? Oh, you're still here?
I...
I THOUGHT SO.
ANYTHING ELSE?
NO...
AND I HAVEN'T RECEIVED ANY FORMS FOR TRANSFERRING SCHOOLS FROM ANYONE EITHER, OKAY?



WASN'T I PREPARED FOR IT?

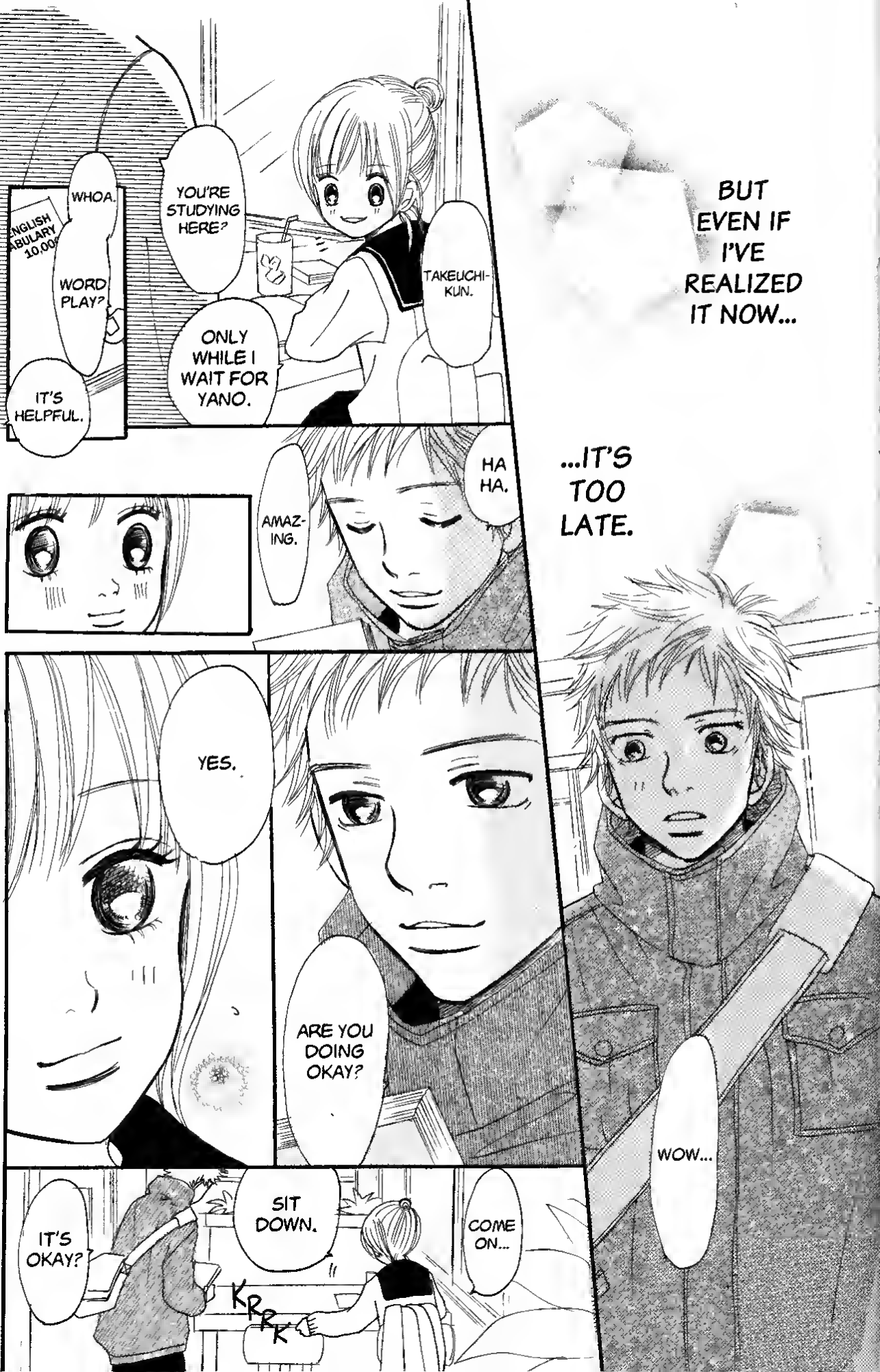
...DO I FEEL SO RELIEVED?

BUT...

A YEAR IS A LONG TIME.
...MUCH LONGER...
IT'S MUCH...
...THAN I FIRST THOUGHT.
HUH?
What's wrong?
COME ON IN.
IT ISN'T LIKE YOU TO COME OVER THIS LATE...
HEE.
JUST FOR A LITTLE WHILE THEN.
IT'S BLACK BEAN COCOA.
okay?
I LOVE IT.

I LOOKED AROUND FOR SOME POTENTIAL CHRISTMAS PRESENTS TODAY.
SHOW ME!
HEY, THIS ACCESSORY WILL LOOK GOOD ON YANO.
YOU THINK SO?
YOU LIKE IT?
EH, IT COMES IN A PAIR AND ONE OF THEM IS FOR A GIRL.
I'VE NEVER BEEN THAT INTERESTED IN THINGS LIKE THIS BUT I THOUGHT IT'D BE NICE...
I COULD WEAR IT EVERY DAY...
...WHEN-EVER I'M NOT WITH HIM...
...TO REMIND ME OF HIM.
I...
I MEAN...
YOU KNOW, LIKE WHEN WE'RE AT HOME...
MM.
IT'S NICE TO FEEL CON-NECTED WHEN YOU'RE APART, DON'T YOU THINK?

MIZU-CHIN, I...
...REGRET IT.
NANA...
WHEN I TOLD HIM I'D BE FINE IF HE LEFT...
I REALLY REGRET SAYING THAT.
WHAT SHOULD I DO NOW?
THE REALITY OF IT DIDN'T SINK IN BEFORE...
NOT BEING ABLE TO SEE YANO...
THE REALITY OF YANO NOT BEING HERE.
I CAN'T IMAGINE A WORLD WITHOUT HIM.


BUT EVEN IF I'VE REALIZED IT NOW...
...IT'S TOO LATE.
WOW...
TAKEUCHI-KUN.
YOU'RE STUDYING HERE?
ONLY WHILE I WAIT FOR YANO.
WHOA.
ENGLISH VOCABULARY 10,000
WORD PLAY?
IT'S HELPFUL.
HA HA.
AMAZ-ING.
YES.
ARE YOU DOING OKAY?
SIT DOWN.
COME ON...
KRRK
IT'S OKAY?

VHRR
...
IT'S PERFECT.
...
...
...
...
...
But I'm still on part 11...
You'll be done before you know it.

WH...
...WHAT?
IF YOU WANT TO TAKE BACK WHAT YOU SAID...
...I THINK IT WOULD BE ABSOLUTELY FINE.
DO YOU THINK I'M FOOLING MYSELF TRYING TO GET INTO THIS COL-LEGE?
DON'T THINK I'M LAME.
ENGLISH IDIOMS 1500
ENGLISH IDIOMS 1500
HA
HA
HA

TAKE BACK...
...WHAT I SAID?
I'M ALMOST DONE WITH PART II, YOU KNOW...
KRRK
I NEED TO GO TO THE BATHROOM.
UH.
HM.
OH.
YANO.
YOU'RE LATE.
BUT...
...WHEN YOU'RE NOT HERE...
I'LL BE DOING STUFF LIKE THIS WITH HER EVERY DAY.
I KNOW...
I WAS HELPING HER STUDY, THAT'S ALL.

ENGLISH
PANESE
ONARY
RIGHT
R
W
L
PHOO
IF YOU WANT TO TAKE BACK WHAT YOU SAID...
...I THINK IT WOULD BE ABSO-LUTELY FINE.

...THERE'S STILL TIME, THOUGH...
MAYBE...
NO, I CAN'T.
flup flup
I MUSTN'T THINK ABOUT IT!!
ABULARY 10000
OH
GRRR
yano
THAT SURPRISED ME.
H-HI...
What was I doing?
HEY THERE
WHAT WERE YOU DOING JUST NOW?
HUH?
I THOUGHT OF SOMETHING STUPID.
I WAS THINKING ABOUT SOMETHING STUPID.
HEY.
COME OUTSIDE.
HUH?

CHAK
HI!
DO YOU REALIZE WHAT TIME IT IS?
OH!
LET'S GO TO THE PARK.
MY PARENTS WILL GET ANGRY IF THEY SEE US.
WHERE?
SHUSH.
Whisper!
BY BUS.
BUS? THEN YOU MISSED THE LAST ONE.
BY BUS.
HOW DID YOU GET HERE?
YANO... LET ME SMELL YOUR BREATH.
HMM
...
YOU'RE DRUNK.
HE WAS DRINKING...
YANO, BE A GOOD BOY AND STAY HERE, OKAY?
I'M GOING TO GET SOME COFFEE
OKAY.
DON'T MOVE, OKAY?
OKAY.

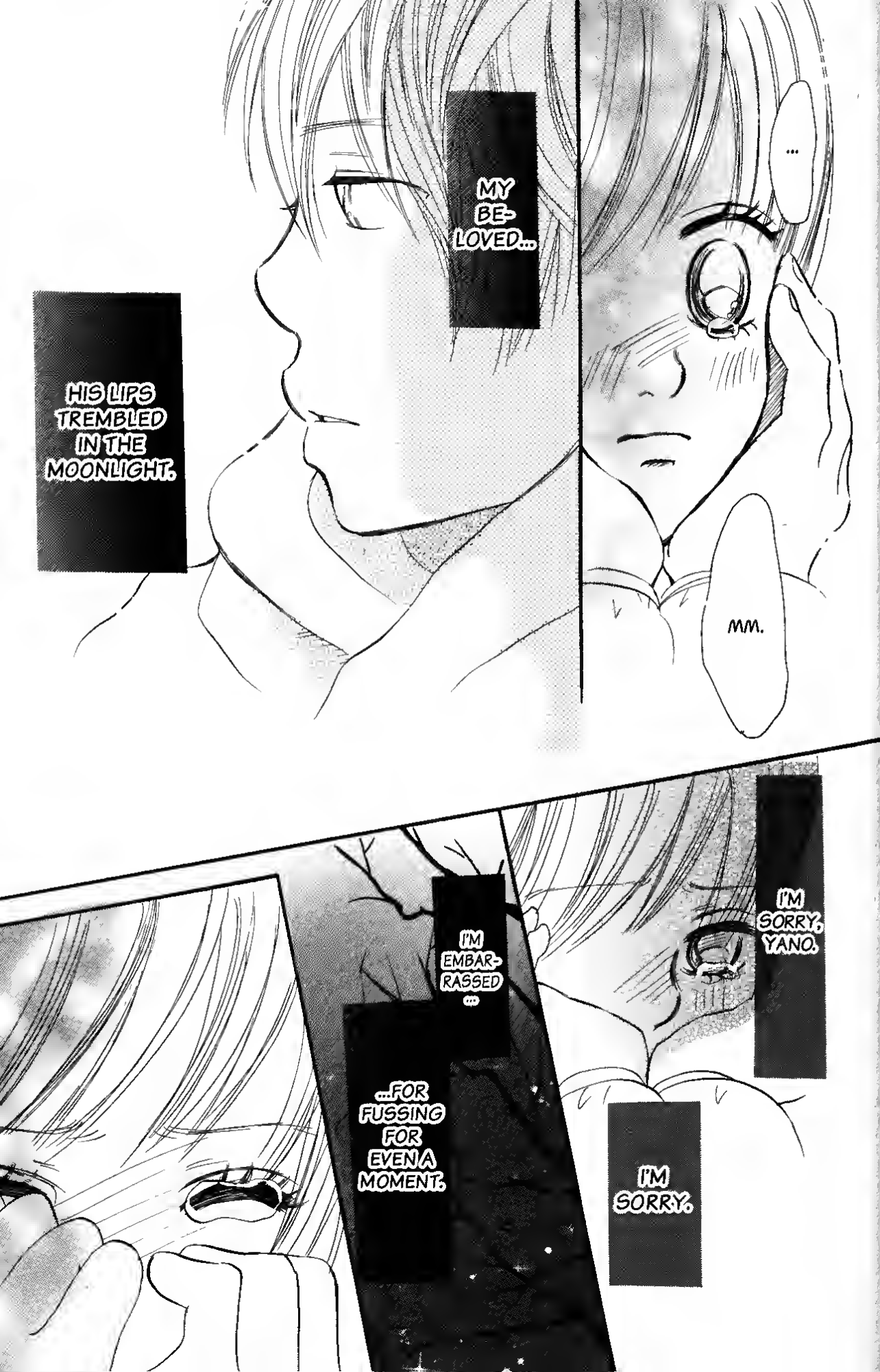
MAYBE...
...HE'S...
...COME TO A DECISION.
WHY DID HE COME SO LATE?
TONK

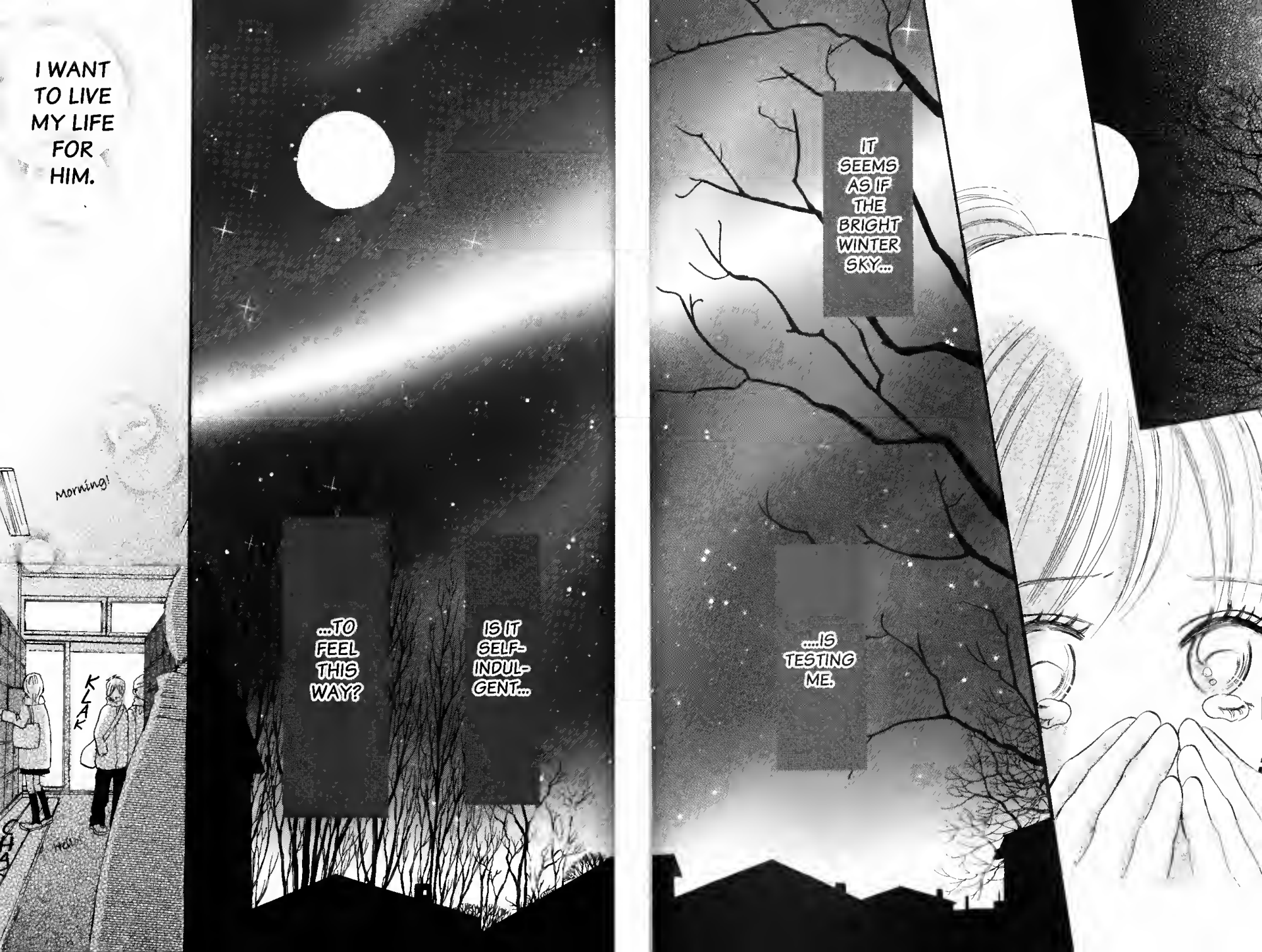
SORRY, TAKA-HASHI.
SORRY.
AND I WAS NICE ENOUGH TO GET YOU COFFEE ...
URGH!
HMPH.
I BET HE HAS NO IDEA HOW I'M FEELING.
AND NOW, ALL OF A SUDDEN...
...HE'S GONE QUIET.
HE'S WASTED.
TAKA-HASHI.
IF I...

IF I WERE AN ADULT...
...AND SAID, "I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING, BUT WOULD YOU PACK A BAG AND COME WITH ME"...
...WOULD YOU?
THAT SOUNDS LIKE A MARRIAGE PROPOSAL.
HA HA.

BUT WHEN WILL WE BE ADULTS?
AT TWENTY ?
I DON'T KNOW.
WHEN WE DON'T NEED OUR PARENTS TO TAKE CARE OF US, I GUESS.
I FEEL STUPID FOR BEING SO NERVOUS ABOUT IT...
...
MAYBE IT IS.
HE SUR-PRISED ME...
I WANT TO GROW UP...
...SO I CAN PROTECT OTHERS RATHER THAN NEEDING TO BE PROTECTED MYSELF.
I WANT TO GROW UP QUICKLY.

I WON'T GIVE ANYONE CAUSE TO COMPLAIN...
...OR TO FEEL SAD.
MY MOTHER...
...MY FAMILY...
...AND MY GIRL.
THAT'S ALL;
THOSE ARE THE PEOPLE...
...I ABSOLUTELY...
...WANT TO PROTECT...
...AS AN ADULT.


HIS LIPS TREMBLED IN THE MOONLIGHT.
MY BE-LOVED...
...
MM.
I'M SORRY, YANO.
I'M EMBAR-RASSED ...
...FOR FUSSING FOR EVEN A MOMENT.
I'M SORRY.


I WANT TO LIVE MY LIFE FOR HIM.
Morning!
KLAK
...TO FEEL THIS WAY?
IS IT SELF-INDUL-GENT...
IT SEEMS AS IF THE BRIGHT WINTER SKY...
....IS TESTING ME.

KLAK
HUH?
LAST NIGHT?
DID I GET HOME OKAY?
WELL, WHEN I WOKE UP, I WAS IN MY BED, SO...
BUT...
HOW DO YOU KNOW THAT?
I WAS DRINKING WITH FRIENDS AT TAKE'S PLACE.
shock
HE DOESN'T REMEMBER LAST NIGHT...
OH.
I HAD A DREAM THAT I WENT TO YOUR HOUSE THOUGH.
You bought me coffee.
AND...
...YOU CALLED ME A DRUNK...
"Fwap"!!
...AND SLAPPED ME REALLY HARD.
HE'S EMBELLISHED IT TOO...
WEIRD DREAM, HUH.
YEAH.
YOU WERE CRYING, TAKAHASHI.
YOU SAID YOU REGRETTED IT.
THAT YOU DIDN'T UNDERSTAND IT AT ALL.

SO WHAT DO YOU REGRET SO MUCH?
HUH?
NOW...
...IS THE TIME.

RIGHT NOW.
YET...
BUT...

...IT WAS ONLY A DREAM.
THERE'S NOTHING TO REGRET.
SILLY...
DON'T TAKE A DREAM SO SERIOUSLY.
AH!
YANO!
PEOPLE WILL SEE US.

OUR FEELINGS ARE COMPLETELY OBVIOUS TO EACH OTHER.

I MAY REGRET NOT TELLING HIM...

I MAY NEVER KNOW IF IT WAS THE RIGHT THING TO DO...

...AND THAT IS FOR YANO'S WISH TO COME TRUE.
I DON'T KNOW IF I'M FOLLOWING MY FATE...
MY WISH WILL BECOME YANO'S WISH...
...OR GOING AGAINST IT.
...AND HIS WISH WILL BECOME MINE.
BUT THERE IS ONE THING I WANT...

THAT'S HOW WE'LL KEEP SUPPORTING EACH OTHER.
MY HEART.
Nana-chan!
AH.
HEY...
IT'S NANAMI.
Catcher
She's still here.
...
ENOUGH...
I...
I WANT IT.

...WILL BE YANO'S WISH...
MY WISH...
AND YANO'S WISH...
...WILL BE MINE.
RIGHT.
YES.

...
I COULDN'T GET IT...
YOU USED UP ALL YOUR MONEY.
AND YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE GOOD AT IT TOO...
NANAMI BOUGHT THE DRINK FOR HIM
I WAS TRYING TOO HARD, THAT'S ALL.
Damn it.
WHAT'S WRONG?
NOTHING.
...SO MY HEART FEELS LIKE IT'S BEING SQUEEZED.
IT'S COLD TODAY...
I'LL LET THE FUTURE...
OH.
IT'S BEEN SNOWING A LOT THIS YEAR.
...TAKE CARE OF ITSELF.

AH.
THERE.
MY HEART...
...IS BEING SQUEEZED...
...AGAIN.

...AS A MEASURE OF MY LOVE FOR YOU.

SO TIGHTLY...

...AS IF...

...TIME IS TICKING AWAY...

...TRACKING THE SOUND OF OUR FOOTSTEPS ON THE SNOW...

KRRK
I MADE YOUR FAVORITE STEW TONIGHT.
MOM...
I WAS WONDERING IF I COULD HAVE MY ALLOWANCE IN ADVANCE.
thok
thok

WHAT DO YOU NEED IT FOR?
I WANT TO BUY A CHRISTMAS PRESENT FOR MY GIRL-FRIEND.
HOW MUCH DO YOU NEED?
TWENTY THOUSAND YEN.
THAT'S WAY TOO MUCH FOR A HIGH SCHOOL BOY TO SPEND ON A PRESENT!
I WANT TO GET HER SOMETHING SPECIAL.
I WON'T ALLOW IT.
YOU WILL...

...BECAUSE I'LL MAKE A DEAL WITH YOU.
...
THIS YEAR'S CHRISTMAS PRESENT...
TA-DAH!
KYAAAAH
AN OVERNIGHT TRIP TO A HOT SPRING!!
AMAZING!

AMAZING.
DOES THIS MEAN...
CAN YOU GO?
...
COURSE
OUTDOOR HOT SPRING
DINNER
HUH?
ONE PERSON
COURTESY
INCLUDED
THIS IS...
AMAZING.
YES!
I'LL TELL MY PARENTS I'M AT MIZU-CHIN'S FOR A SLEEPOVER!
It'll be fine!!
FOR CHRISTMAS.
I DON'T BELIEVE IT. IT MEANS...
WE CAN SPEND ...
... CHRISTMAS TOGETHER?
TOGETHER...
REALLY?
THAT'S GREAT.
EH?
HA HA

YANO...
ALL CHRISTMAS.
...IS GOING TO STAY NEXT...
12/2
12/18
ONE PERSON ¥8
OUTDOOR HOT SPRING
DINNER
COURTESY BUS INCLUDED
DATE
12/2
12/5
12/18
12/19

I COULD HEAR...

...MY HEART BEATING.

I'M SORRY...
...TAKA-HASHI.

I'M MOVING WITH MY MOM...
...TO TOKYO.

YES...
IT'S FINE.
IT WILL BE FINE.

AND WITH SUCH CONTRA-DICTORY FEEL-INGS...
I WON'T REGRET TELLING HIM...
...THAT IT'S FINE IF HE LEAVES.
...THE WINTER OF MY 17TH YEAR CAME TO AN END.

Chapter 30

KYAAH
SPLOOSH
OUR FIRST TRIP TOGETHER.
HA HA HA HA
IT'S FREEZ-ING!
FERRY RIDES IN WINTER ARE THE WORST! IT'S TOO COLD!!
I KIND OF LIKE IT.
IS HIS HEART...
SMP SMP
...POUND-ING LIKE MINE?

SHALL WE TAKE A PHOTO?
YES.
»Soof
OKAY?
HOLD ON.
Oh, we're almost at the island.
YOU LOOK THE SAME AS ALWAYS.
Take another one.
AAH!
MY FACE LOOKS WEIRD.
HUH?
TAKE A PHOTO WITH MY CELL TOO!
Takahashi
The island..
HOW COME YANO IS ALWAYS SO PHOTO-GENIC?
...
I LOOK EVEN WORSE...
カシャ

YANO...
SEND ME LOTS OF PHOTOS WHEN YOU'RE IN TOKYO.
EH?
YES.
I WANT TO SEE WHAT YOUR SCHOOL UNIFORM LOOKS LIKE...
It's a blazer, right?
...AND MANY MORE...
... PHOTOS TOO.
EVEN THOUGH WE'RE APART...
...WE CAN ALWAYS BE IN TOUCH, RIGHT?
YEAH.
I CAN HEAR YOUR VOICE AND SEE YOUR FACE...
...AND TEXT YOU TOO.

I...
...MIGHT NOT BE ABLE TO CALL YOU THAT OFTEN.
WHAT?
MY MOM AND I...WILL PROBABLY BE LIVING ON A PRETTY TIGHT BUDGET.
I'M SORRY.
BUT I'LL CALL ONCE A WEEK.
IT'S OKAY.
I WON'T BE ABLE TO CALL YOU AS OFTEN AS I USED TO.
I'LL BE FINE.
SO DON'T PUSH YOURSELF TOO MUCH.
JUST BE THERE FOR YOUR MOM.

I CAN'T LET MY MOM RUN HERSELF RAGGED, CAN I?
Even with college entrance exams?
A JOB...?
BUT I'LL BE LOOKING FOR A PART-TIME JOB.
Aah
HMM...

ドレード
ドレード
WHY ARE YOU TAKING PHOTOS?
BECAUSE...
HEH HEH
...THIS MOMENT...
...IS PRECIOUS.

YOU WANT TO BUY SOME THINGS BEFORE WE CHECK IN?
YEAH.
OH!
I WANT TO LOOK INSIDE THAT SOUVENIR STORE.
I LIKE THESE!
ENGRAVING AVAILABLE
BUT YOU CAN GET THOSE AT THE AIRPORT OR TRAIN STATION.
IT'S FINE.
OOH...
LOTS OF TAKA-HASHI...
WHERE, WHERE?
SEAL CHOCOLATES
FAMOUS MARIMO JELLY BALL
CRANE'S EGG
...
I CAN BUY THAT AT THE SUPER-MARKET.
NO!
WANT ONE?
AH!
A MARIMO STRAP...
SHALL WE EACH GET ONE AS A MEMENTO?
I'LL PASS... ...
SO LAME ...

NICE.
THE ROOM IS BETTER THAN I EXPECTED...
...FOR THE PRICE.

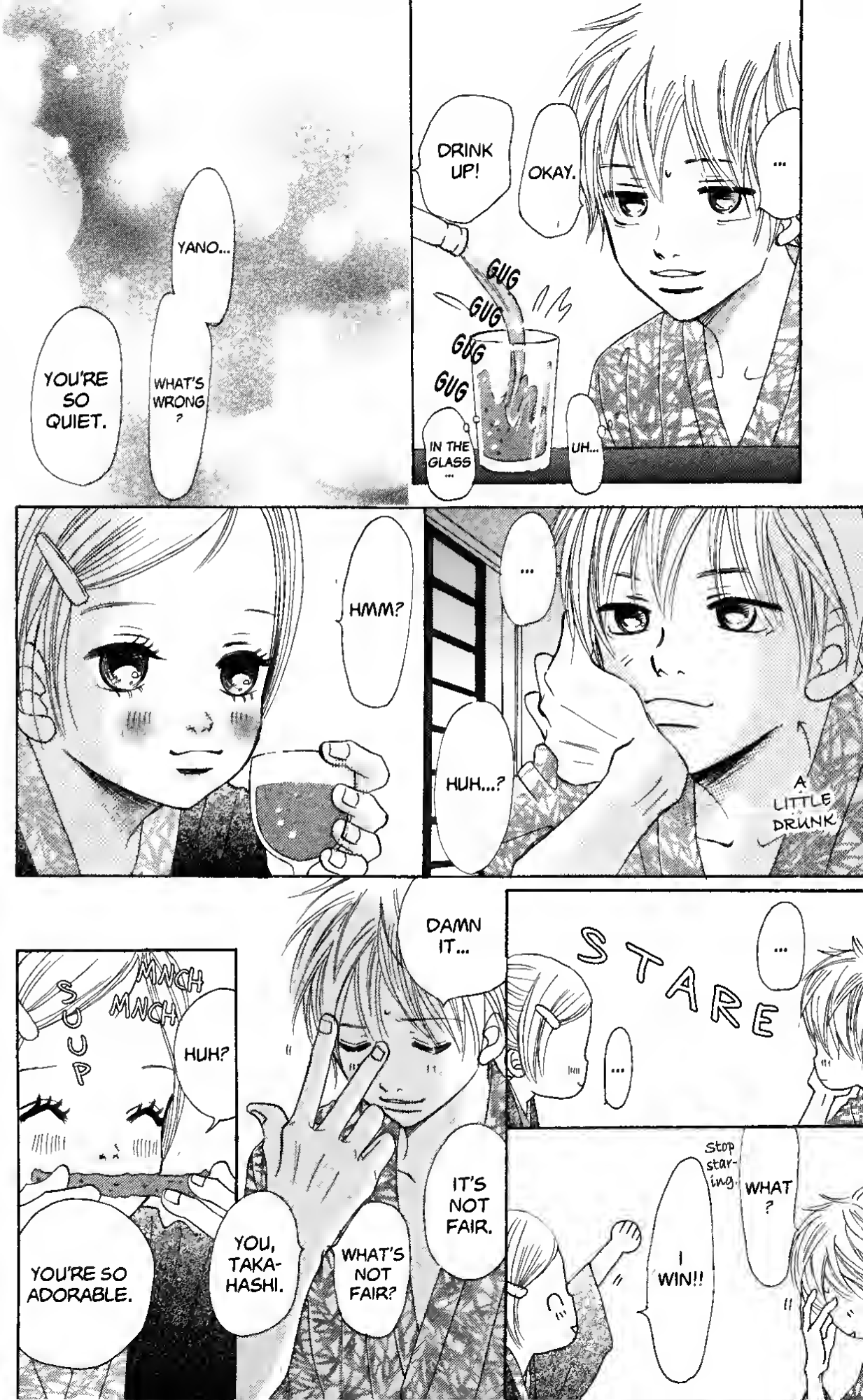
SCARED STIFF
NICE VIEW TOO.
IS THAT THE HOT SPRING?
DOES...
...THE ROOM ATTENDANT COME TO LAY OUT THE FUTON?
THERE'S STILL TIME BEFORE DINNER.
LET'S CHECK OUT THE HOT SPRI—
HUH?
HEY...
Are you all right?
I...
TO TELL THE TRUTH, EVER SINCE THIS MORNING...
NO— SINCE THREE DAYS AGO...
...I'VE FELT EXTREMELY NERVOUS.

I'M GLAD THE HOT SPRINGS FOR MEN AND WOMEN ARE SEPA-RATE.
MY HEART IS POUNDING.
AHH...
...
BACK THEN ...
I WANT YOU TO MAKE ME YOURS, YANO.
I COULD GO WITH THE FLOW OF THINGS, BUT...
IT WILL WORK ITSELF OUT.
IT'LL BE OKAY.

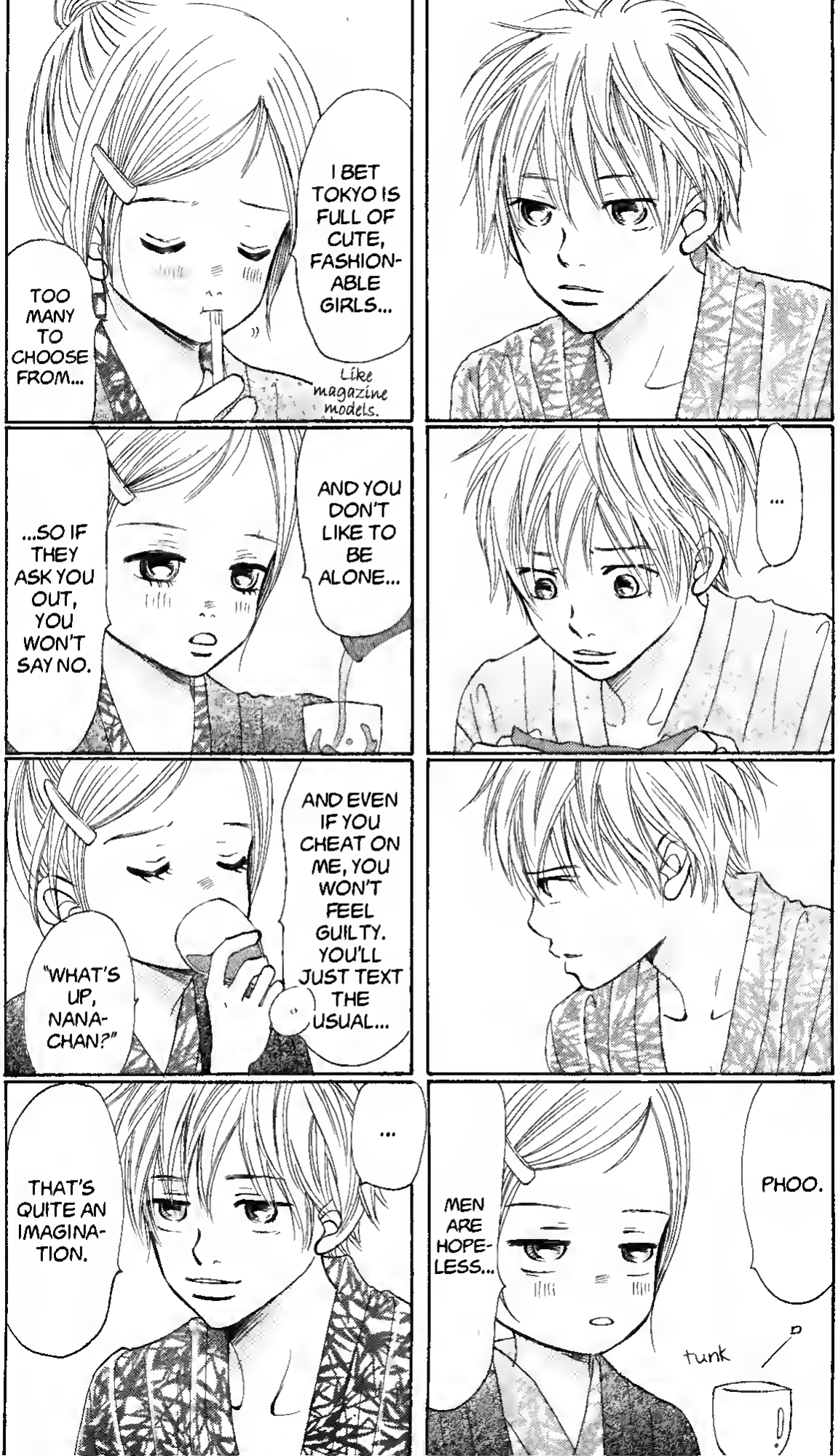
S...
SORRY TO KEEP YOU WAITING.
...IT'S FINE.
WE'RE BOTH IN YUKATA...
IT FLUSTERS ME.
YOU DIDN'T DRY YOUR HAIR?
...

OH...
NO.
I DIDN'T TAKE MUCH TIME WITH THE HAIR DRYER.
I GUESS I SHOULD HAVE DRIED IT MORE...
YOU LOOK NICE THIS WAY.
PLEASE DON'T...
BLUSH
CHEERS!
tink
...MAKE MY HEART BEAT ANY FASTER...

IT'S REALLY GOOD.
YOU'VE ONLY HAD THE NON-ALCOHOLIC KIND BEFORE, RIGHT?
YEAH.
MORE, PLEASE!!
...
HURRY!
HURRY!
GYA
HA
HA
HA
HEY...
LET'S OPEN THE OTHER BOTTLE!
TAKAHASHI, YOU'RE DRINKING TOO FAST.
Take a breather.
UM...
EHHHH?
WHY?
COME ON, OPEN IT! OPEN IT!
If we run out, we can always go get more.
THIS IS BAD.
It's grim.
SHE'S A LUSH...
YOU HAVEN'T BEEN DRINKING THAT MUCH, YANO.
POK
I CAN'T GET A HARD-ON IF I DRINK TOO MUCH...
...
WELL...
I...
You know
...LIKE TO DRINK AT MY OWN PACE.
WHAT?!
DON'T BE BORING.
DRINK MORE AND GET A LITTLE DRUNK...

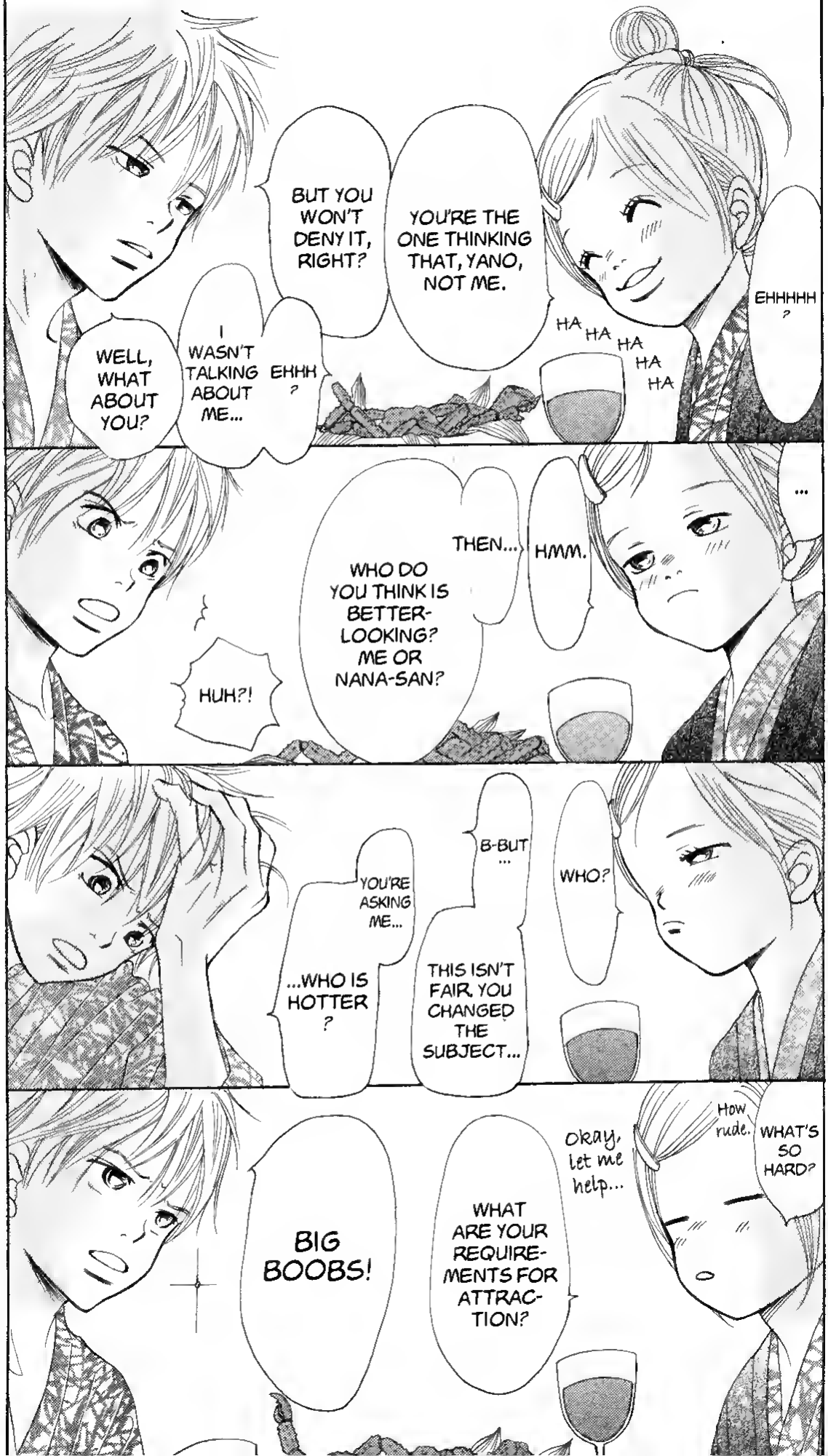

YANO...
WHAT'S WRONG?
YOU'RE SO QUIET.
DRINK UP!
OKAY.
...
GUG GUG GUG GUG
IN THE GLASS...
UH...
HMM?
...
HUH...?
A LITTLE DRUNK
STARE
...
...
DAMN IT...
IT'S NOT FAIR.
WHAT'S NOT FAIR?
YOU, TAKA-HASHI.
YOU'RE SO ADORABLE.
MNCH MNCH
SUP
HUH?
Stop staring.
WHAT?
I WIN!!

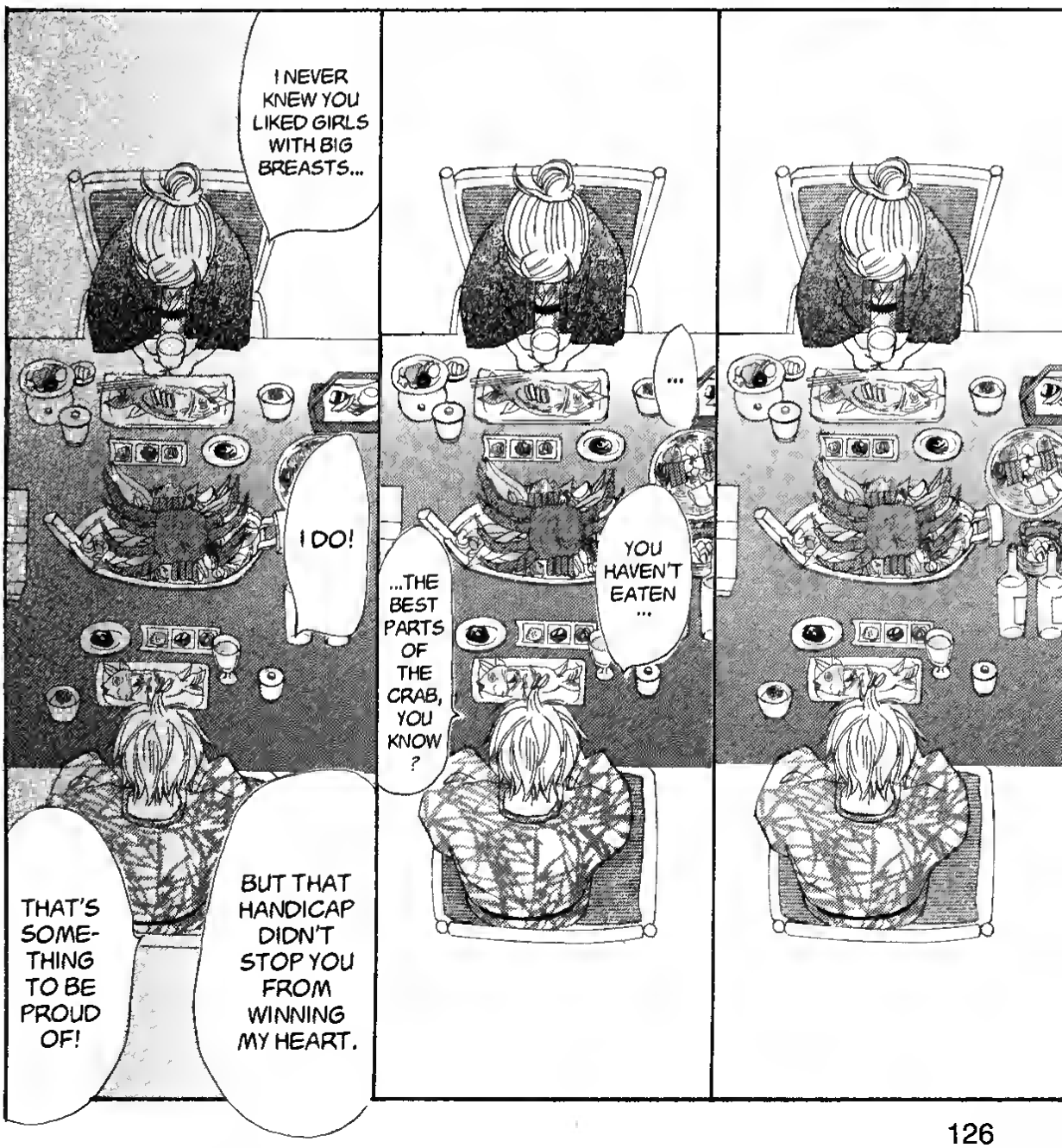
...
THIS?
YEAH?
YANO...
krik
...
shup
shup
...
YANO...
HM?
YOU'LL CHEAT ON ME...
...
HUH?
thoop
YOU'LL CHEAT ON ME WHEN YOU'RE IN TOKYO, HUH.


I BET TOKYO IS FULL OF CUTE, FASHION-ABLE GIRLS...
Like magazine models.
TOO MANY TO CHOOSE FROM...
AND YOU DON'T LIKE TO BE ALONE...
...SO IF THEY ASK YOU OUT, YOU WON'T SAY NO.
...
AND EVEN IF YOU CHEAT ON ME, YOU WON'T FEEL GUILTY. YOU'LL JUST TEXT THE USUAL...
"WHAT'S UP, NANA-CHAN?"
PHOO.
MEN ARE HOPE-LESS...
tunk
...
THAT'S QUITE AN IMAGINA-TION.

OKAY. HOW ABOUT THIS, THEN?
THERE'S A SEEMINGLY NICE, STRONG, SIMPLE GUY OVER IN HOKKAIDO...
KREEK
...YOU KNOW?
...
IMAGINA-TION?
hic
YOU'RE GOOD-NATURED.
YOU'RE EASILY DECEIVED BY KIND WORDS...
AND YOU'RE A SOFTIE...
...FALL FOR IT, RIGHT?
YOU MIGHT EVEN...
...YOU KNOW?
GUG
GUG
AND THIS SNEAKY GUY IS REALLY GOOD AT IMPOSING HIMSELF...
...
DOMP
TAKEUCHI-KUN ISN'T SNEAKY. HE'S A REALLY NICE PERSON, OKAY?

YOU CAN'T STAND LOSING TO TAKEUCHI-KUN, YANO.
HA HA HA HA HA!
HA!
Pour, pour...
YOU'VE BEEN FOOLED ...
I KNEW IT.
HYOOO
...
...BUT YOU DON'T WANT TO ADMIT IT, HUH.
...BUT SECRETLY YOU THINK TAKEUCHI-KUN IS BETTER-LOOKING THAN YOU ARE...
YOU PRETEND YOU DON'T CARE...
...
GYA HA HA
HUH?
YOU THINK TAKE IS BETTER-LOOKING THAN ME?
TAKE'S BETTER-LOOKING...?
...


EHHHHH?
HA HA HA HA HA
YOU'RE THE ONE THINKING THAT, YANO, NOT ME.
BUT YOU WON'T DENY IT, RIGHT?
EHHH?
I WASN'T TALKING ABOUT ME...
WELL, WHAT ABOUT YOU?
...
HMM.
THEN...
WHO DO YOU THINK IS BETTER-LOOKING? ME OR NANA-SAN?
HUH?!
WHO?
B-BUT...
THIS ISN'T FAIR. YOU CHANGED THE SUBJECT...
YOU'RE ASKING ME...
...WHO IS HOTTER?
How rude.
WHAT'S SO HARD?
Okay, let me help...
WHAT ARE YOUR REQUIRE-MENTS FOR ATTRAC-TION?
BIG BOOBS!


I NEVER KNEW YOU LIKED GIRLS WITH BIG BREASTS...
I DO!
THAT'S SOMETHING TO BE PROUD OF!
BUT THAT HANDICAP DIDN'T STOP YOU FROM WINNING MY HEART.
...
YOU HAVEN'T EATEN ...
...THE BEST PARTS OF THE CRAB, YOU KNOW?

CAKE!
I WANT THE CHRISTMAS CAKE!
OKAY, OKAY. HERE...
CANDLE?
Isn't that for birthday cakes?
OH... FOUND IT.
THE CANDLE?
Merry Christmas
FLASH

MERRY CHRISTMAS.
Yummy!
HEE HEE HEE
CORK
You still want to drink?

FINALLY...
B-BMP
B-BMP
B-BMP
B-BMP
Hurray.
Hurray.
THE DAY HAS COME...
POFF
FUTONS! FUTONS!
HURRAY!
THERE'S SOMETHING PERVY ABOUT TWO FUTONS NEXT TO EACH OTHER...
...
IT'S LIKE WE'RE ON AN OVERNIGHT FIELD TRIP.
Pillow fight!!
YA—
GRAB
IS SHE IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL?!
...
WH...
What was that?
YANO...?
Let's play!
WHERE ARE YOU HIDING?
OOF!
POFF
POFF
POFF
POFF
KYAAAAAH
QUIT IT, TAKAHASHI.
HEY...
HA HA HA
ACK!

FUMP
Aah!
OH.
...BUDGE.
HE WON'T...

CHAK
YANO ...
...
YANO ...
MM?
...
SORRY ...
I...
...FEEL SICK.
FOOL! YOU DRANK TOO MUCH.
UGH..
I FEEL GROSS...
HURRY AND THROW UP.
NOOO...
I DON'T WANT TO!
PUT YOUR FINGER DOWN YOUR THROAT.
NOOO-
I DON'T LIKE THROWING UP.
YOU'LL FEEL BETTER AFTERWARD.
WATER.
WATER.
OPEN YOUR MOUTH, TAKA-HASHI.
EH?
HWA—
POK

HUUUUUUG
shaa
koff
koff
koff
koff
koff
koff
...
FEELING BETTER?
squik
...
YOU SAW ME PUKE...
And you cleaned it up.
koff
koff
DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT.
It happens all the time
HERE, WATER.
NOW I CAN'T KISS YOU BECAUSE I THREW UP...!
GARGLE WITH THIS 100 TIMES...
...AND I'LL FRENCH KISS YOU!

I'M SORRY, YANO...
IT'S OKAY.
I'LL HEAL QUICKLY.
DON'T OVERDO IT.
HOW DO YOU FEEL?
HMM...
I'M STILL A LITTLE DIZZY...
REST A BIT.
I'M... REALLY SLEEPY.
GO TO SLEEP.
I'LL WAKE YOU UP LATER.
PROM-ISE?
OKAY.
ABSO-LUTELY.
THAT WAS QUICK.

HA HA.
HA...
HA.
...
MMBL
MMBL
She's so silly.
CRAB?
tup tup
...YOU IDIOT!
YANO...
MMBL
MMBL
OH?
SLEEP TALK-ING?
SO MUCH...
CRAB...
CRAB...
...
I LIED...
I LOVE YOU.

YANO...
MMBL
YEAH ?
SHOULD I NOT BE REPLYING TO HER?
YANO ...
suff
DO YOU STILL WANT NANA-SAN...
...TO BE WITH YOU INSTEAD?

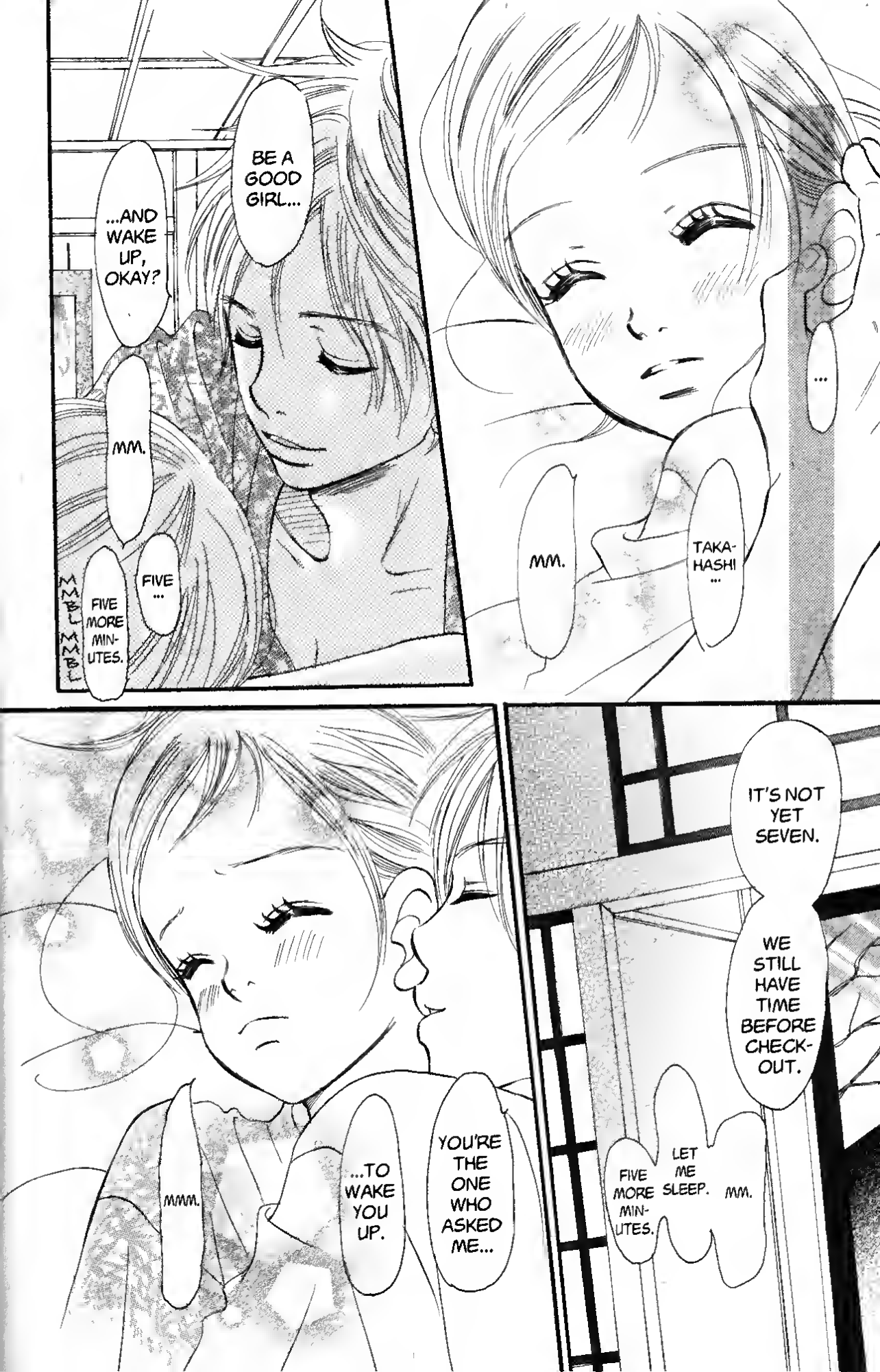
AND BEFORE WE KNEW IT...

...WE HAD...
...PASSED NANA-SAN IN AGE.

Chapter 31

cheep
cheep
cheep
cheep
...

WHAT SHOULD I DO?
(VOICE OF YANO'S HEART)
IT'S MORNING?!
ALREADY?!
JUMP
tweet
tweet
tweet
(THE BIRDS ARE SINGING.)
IT'S SUCH A CLEAR MORNING.
AND SLEEPING SOUNDLY NEXT TO ME IS CUTE TAKAHASHI... (VOICE OF YANO'S HEART)
...I FELL ASLEEP.
I CAN'T BELIEVE...
← VACANT LOOK
TAKAHASHI...
YOU LOOK REALLY SEXY.


BE A GOOD GIRL...
...AND WAKE UP, OKAY?
MM.
FIVE...
FIVE MORE MINUTES.
MMBL MMBL
...
MM.
TAKAHASHI...
IT'S NOT YET SEVEN.
WE STILL HAVE TIME BEFORE CHECK-OUT.
FIVE MORE MINUTES.
LET ME SLEEP.
MM.
YOU'RE THE ONE WHO ASKED ME...
...TO WAKE YOU UP.
MMM.

FWOK
LEAVE ME ALONE!
I TOLD YOU TO LET ME SLEEP!
HMPH!
Give it a rest, moron.
SHE'S NOT A MORNING PERSON...
...
...
...
THAT WAS CRUEL, YANO.

REEL
YOU PROM-ISED.
...
WHY DIDN'T YOU WAKE ME UP?
← DOESN'T REMEMBER ANYTHING
AND WHY DO YOU LOOK SO WIPED-OUT?
I was in the endur-ance room.
DON'T WORRY. I ONLY REMEM-BER YOUR NAKED THIGH...
THE GUY WHO REMAINED INSIDE THE ENDURANCE ROOM FOR AN HOUR AND WITHSTOOD (?) THE TEMPTATION OF NANAMI'S THIGH...
DID I LOOK WEIRD SLEEPING?
I slept like the dead...
SIGH
And stop staggering around!
Hey!
STOP IT! YOU'RE EMBAR-RASSING ME.
Sump
OH, RIGHT.
I...
...GOT SOME-THING FOR YOU.
...

KEEN
AREN'T YOU SURPRISED?
I KNEW WHAT IT WAS.
...
AW, THAT'S NO FUN!
BUT...
I BET WE'RE THE ONLY COUPLE IN JAPAN WHO HAS MATCHING MARIMO STRAPS!
THAT ASSUMPTION IS RUDE TO THE MAKERS ...
BUT...
...WON'T LOOKING AT IT CHEER YOU UP WHEN YOU'RE SAD AND DEPRESSED?
YOU'LL FEEL LIKE LAUGHING, RIGHT?

I LOVE YOU.
...
HUH?
WHAT?
Is there something on my face?

PROMISE ME.
IN ONE YEAR...
...WE'LL MEET IN TOKYO.

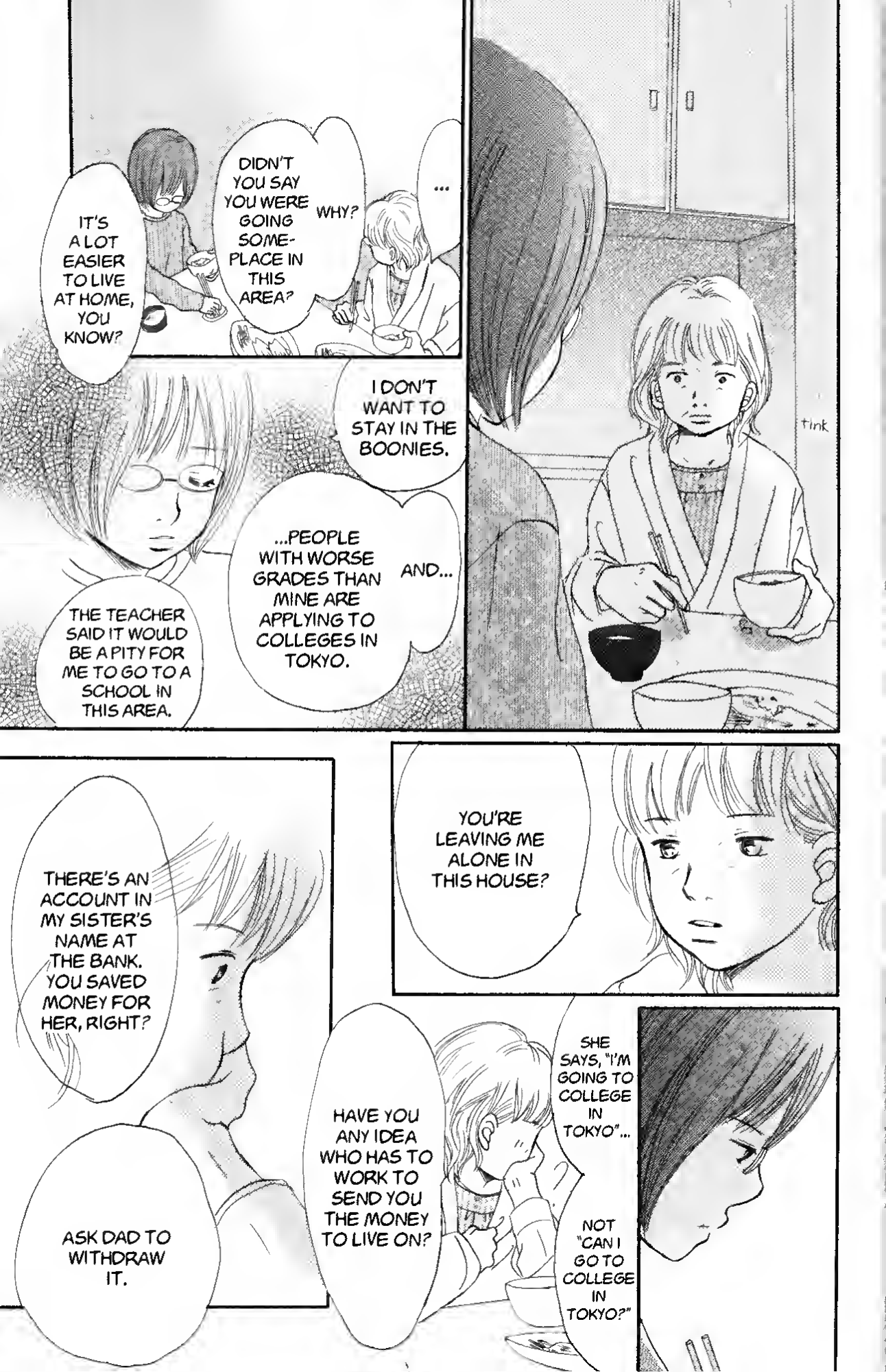
WHILE WE'RE APART I WON'T FALL IN LOVE WITH ANYONE ELSE.
IT'S A VOW.

I'M REALLY HAPPY THAT YOU CARE FOR ME, TAKEUCHI-KUN.
BUT YOU'LL BE WASTING YOUR TIME IF YOU KEEP WAITING.
DON'T WAIT FOR MY FEELINGS TO CHANGE.
slump
THAT'S HARSH.
I SAID NOT TO GIVE ME AN ANSWER YET.
S...
SORRY.
...

YOU'RE NOT GOING TO FALL IN LOVE WITH ANYONE ELSE?
RIGHT.
ARE YOU SURE?
A YEAR FROM NOW?
FIVE YEARS FROM NOW?
HOW CAN YOU KNOW...
...THE FUTURE?
BECAUSE I PROMISED.

TAKEUCHI-KUN, YOU TOLD ME YOU WANTED TO PROTECT ME.
BUT THIS TIME...
I WANT TO BE THE ONE TO PROTECT YANO.
I'VE ALREADY BROKEN ONE PROMISE I MADE TO HIM.
I PUSHED HIM AWAY FROM ME.
I BETRAYED HIM.

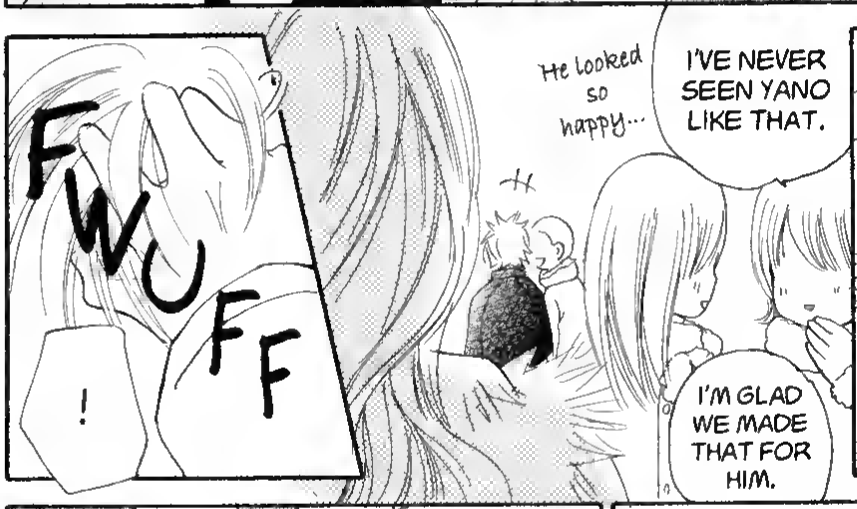
I DON'T WANT TO LIE AROUND IN BED ALL DAY.
I SHOULD GET BACK TO MY JOB SOON.
YOU'RE GOING BACK TO WORK?
YOU DON'T HAVE TO, DO YOU?
knock
knock
MOM...
...I MADE DINNER.
IF I STAY INSIDE, I GET DE-PRESSED.
IT'S... BETTER THAN BEING INSIDE THIS HOUSE.
MOM...
I'M GOING TO COLLEGE IN TOKYO.


...
WHY?
DIDN'T YOU SAY YOU WERE GOING SOME-PLACE IN THIS AREA?
IT'S A LOT EASIER TO LIVE AT HOME, YOU KNOW?
tink
I DON'T WANT TO STAY IN THE BOONIES.
AND...
...PEOPLE WITH WORSE GRADES THAN MINE ARE APPLYING TO COLLEGES IN TOKYO.
THE TEACHER SAID IT WOULD BE A PITY FOR ME TO GO TO A SCHOOL IN THIS AREA.
YOU'RE LEAVING ME ALONE IN THIS HOUSE?
SHE SAYS, "I'M GOING TO COLLEGE IN TOKYO"...
NOT "CAN I GO TO COLLEGE IN TOKYO?"
HAVE YOU ANY IDEA WHO HAS TO WORK TO SEND YOU THE MONEY TO LIVE ON?
THERE'S AN ACCOUNT IN MY SISTER'S NAME AT THE BANK. YOU SAVED MONEY FOR HER, RIGHT?
ASK DAD TO WITHDRAW IT.

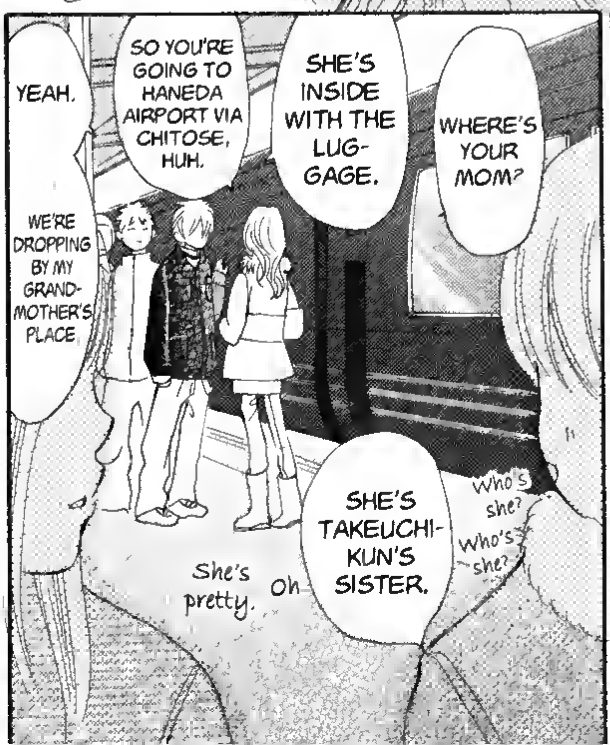
NOW YOU HAVE TO PAY FOR ONLY ONE CHILD'S SCHOOL EXPENSES, SO YOU SHOULD HAVE EXTRA MONEY.
...
YOU'RE UN-FEELING...
...JUST LIKE YOUR FATHER.
BE-CAUSE... IN TOKYO...
...THERE'S SOMETHING I WANT.
SOME-THING I WANT...
...NO MATTER WHAT.

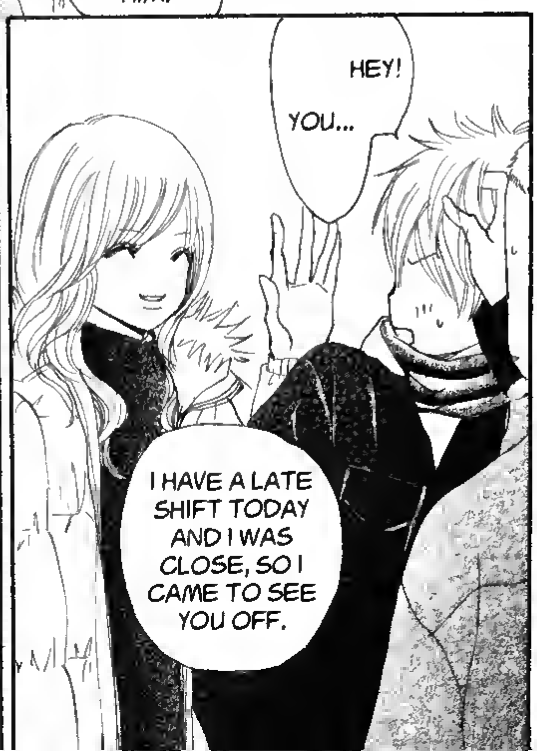
...
YUCK!
NANA, YOU LOOK REALLY UGLY!!
WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOUR FACE?!
I CRIED TOO MUCH LAST NIGHT...
I WOKE UP LOOKING LIKE THIS.
THAT FACE IS UNREAL!!
WHAT CAN I DO?
I DON'T WANT YANO SEEING ME LIKE THIS.
Sob
Sob
SOMEONE GO GET COOLING GEL!
WHAT'LL HAPPEN TO LALAMI?
MY GRAND-MOTHER WILL LOOK AFTER HER FOR A WHILE.
THEN...
...IF POSSIBLE, I WANT TO BRING HER TO MY APARTMENT IN TOKYO.
HMM.
AH!
HERE'S MY AD-DRESS...

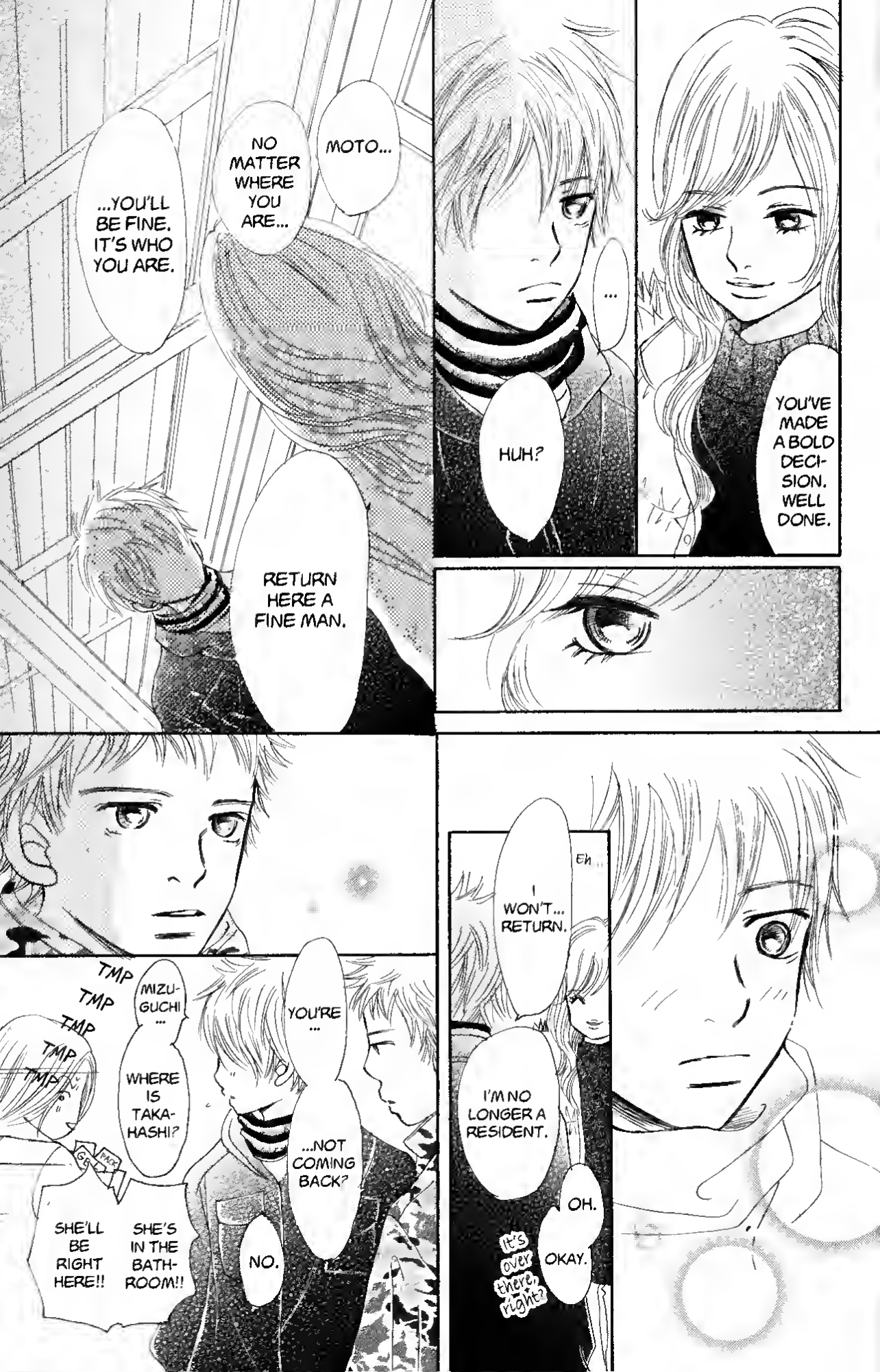
HEH.
Kawasaki-sh, Miyamae-ku
Tel 04x
BUT THIS ISN'T IN TOKYO.
MY SCHOOL IS IN TOKYO, THOUGH.
THE APART-MENT IS ONLY 30 MINUTES FROM SHIBUYA.
OOH ...
YANO, WE ALL SIGNED THIS FOR YOU.


FWUFF!
He looked so happy...
I'VE NEVER SEEN YANO LIKE THAT.
I'M GLAD WE MADE THAT FOR HIM.

GEH.
WHAT DO MEAN, "GEH"?
THANK ... YOU.
HE'S JUST TOUCHED.


YEAH.
SO YOU'RE GOING TO HANEDA AIRPORT VIA CHITOSE, HUH.
SHE'S INSIDE WITH THE LUG-GAGE.
WHERE'S YOUR MOM?
WE'RE DROPPING BY MY GRAND-MOTHER'S PLACE.
SHE'S TAKEUCHI-KUN'S SISTER.
Who's she?
Who's she?
Oh
She's pretty.


HEY!
YOU...
I HAVE A LATE SHIFT TODAY AND I WAS CLOSE, SO I CAME TO SEE YOU OFF.


MOTO...
NO MATTER WHERE YOU ARE...
...YOU'LL BE FINE. IT'S WHO YOU ARE.
RETURN HERE A FINE MAN.
...
HUH?
YOU'VE MADE A BOLD DECI-SION. WELL DONE.
Eh...
I WON'T... RETURN.
I'M NO LONGER A RESIDENT.
OH.
OKAY.
It's over there, right?
YOU'RE...
...NOT COMING BACK?
NO.
MIZU-GUCHI...
WHERE IS TAKA-HASHI?
TMP TMP TMP TMP TMP
SHE'S IN THE BATH-ROOM!!
SHE'LL BE RIGHT HERE!!

TMP
TMP
TMP
TMP
TMP
A REALLY LONG ONE!!
YEAH!
IS SHE TAKING A CRAP OR SOMETHING?
HUH?
A really long crap...
WHAT THE HELL DID SHE EAT?
NOT FOR SPRING OR SUMMER BREAK?
REALLY? YOU'RE NOT COMING BACK AT ALL?
...
NO.
THIS SUCKS.
ON TODAY OF ALL DAYS...
I CAN'T COME BACK IN THE SPRING OR SUMMER.
I PROBABLY WON'T HAVE ANY MONEY.
THANK YOU SO MUCH, MIZU-CHIN...
NO PROB-LEM.
WAS YANO LOOKING FOR ME?
I WONDER IF THIS'LL GET RID OF THE SWELLING?
DON'T WORRY. I MADE UP AN EXCUSE.

SO THE NEXT TIME I'LL SEE YOU IS WHEN I GET ACCEPTED TO UNIVERSITY.
Go on! You look fine now.
TO TELL YOU THE TRUTH, I'M SURPRISED YOU MADE SUCH AN EXTREME DECISION.
I CAN'T ...
I KNOW I'LL CRY.

I DON'T KNOW WHAT REGRET IS ANYMORE.
I MAY JUST...
....BE REPEATING THE SAME CYCLE.

IF YOU ASK, "DO YOU WANT TO GO?"
OF COURSE I DON'T.
"WILL YOU BE FINE APART?"
OBVIOUSLY I WON'T BE.
I'VE ALWAYS DEMANDED OF MY GIRLFRIENDS THAT THEY STAY BY MY SIDE.
I PROMISED MYSELF ...
...I'D NEVER LET GO AGAIN.
EVER SINCE THAT DAY...

I CAN'T BELIEVE I'M SO WEAK!
ARGH!
skrk
skrk
I hate myself...
BUT LISTEN UP!
I WON'T LAY A FINGER ON HER WHILE YOU'RE GONE, SO DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME.

AND YOU'VE GOT A LEGITIMATE REASON TO GO TO TOKYO.
I DON'T LIKE TO BE UNFAIR...
REMEM-BER THAT.
...I'LL TAKE HER AWAY FROM YOU.
BUT IF YOU EVER LET YOUR GUARD DOWN...
...AND LET GO OF TAKAHASHI...

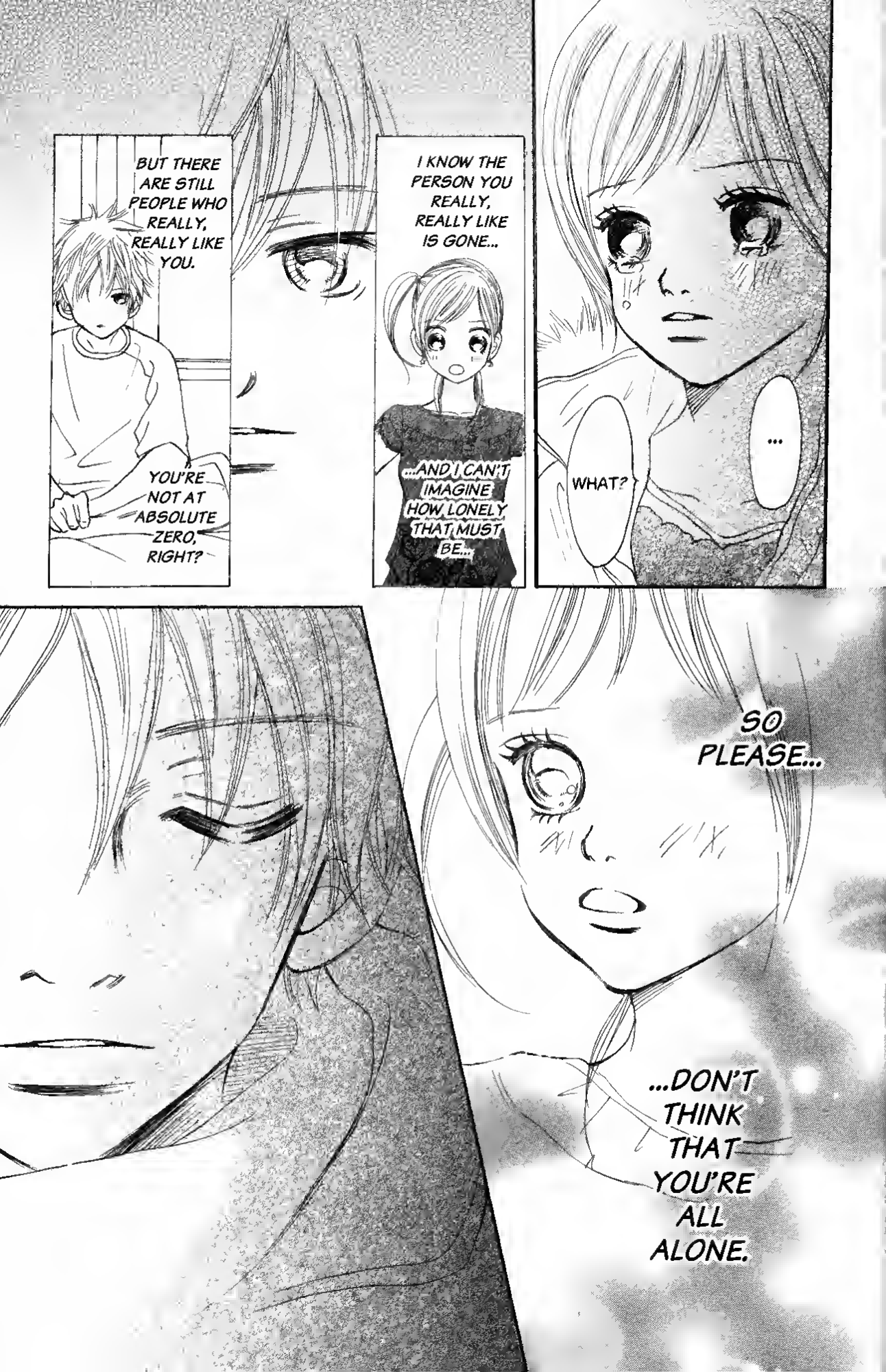
THE REAL MATCH STARTS AFTER I GET TO TOKYO.
SO ONE YEAR FROM NOW...
...YOU BETTER BE PREPARED!
PHEW
... WHY DO YOU LOOK SO RELIEVED?
BUT YOU KNOW ...
I WON'T BE ABLE TO TAKE IT...
...IF YOU STUDY TOGETHER, GO TO THE LIBRARY, ETC.
EH?
HUH?
WHAT'S WRONG WITH IT?
OF COURSE WE'LL DO THAT. WHY?
...
EH...
AND GOING TO THE SUMMER FESTIVAL TOGETHER ...
WE WILL!
THAT'S THE SAME AS LAYING A FINGER ON HER.
NO IT'S NOT. IT'S FRIENDSHIP.
EH... BUT ...
YANO!

...
LET'S GIVE THEM...
...A MOMENT ALONE.

RHMMMPH
NO MATTER WHERE YOU ARE...

...OR HOW LONELY YOU ARE...
...OR HOW HARD A TIME YOU'RE HAVING...
REMEMBER...
...I'M HERE THINKING OF YOU.
YOU'RE NEVER ALONE.
YANO...

...
ABSOLUTE ZERO...

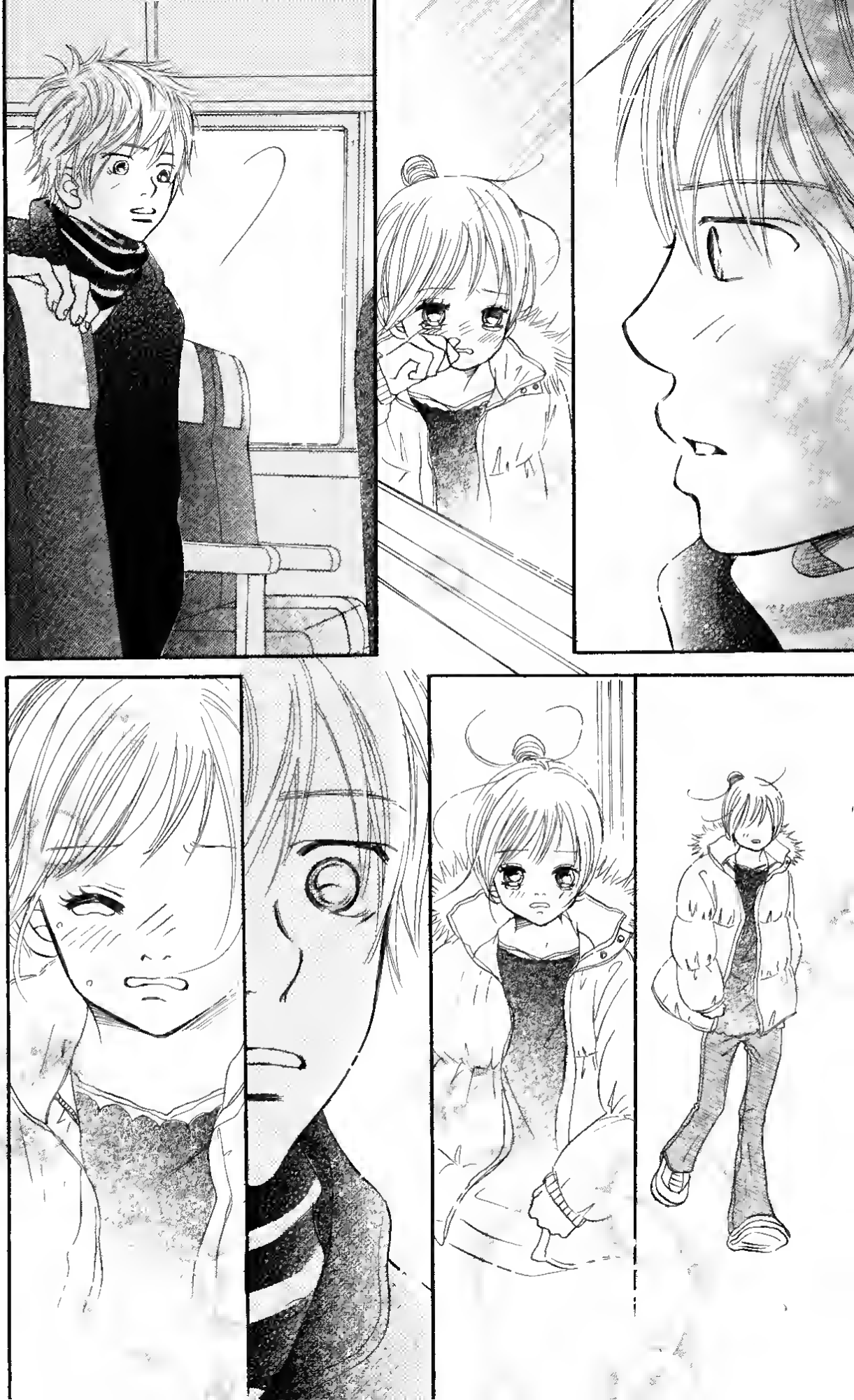

BUT THERE ARE STILL PEOPLE WHO REALLY, REALLY LIKE YOU.
YOU'RE NOT AT ABSOLUTE ZERO, RIGHT?
I KNOW THE PERSON YOU REALLY, REALLY LIKE IS GONE...
...AND I CAN'T IMAGINE HOW LONELY THAT MUST BE...
...
WHAT?
SO PLEASE...
...DON'T THINK THAT YOU'RE ALL ALONE.

RESERVED
SEATS
RESER

IT'S NOT ZERO.
IT'S BEEN...
...PRIME PLUS...

...SINCE I MET YOU, TAKAHASHI.
I'D BEEN LIVING ALL THIS TIME...
...TO MEET YOU, TAKAHASHI.

KTUNK
KTUNK
KTUNK
KTUNK
KTUNK
MOTO-
HARU...
OVER
HERE.

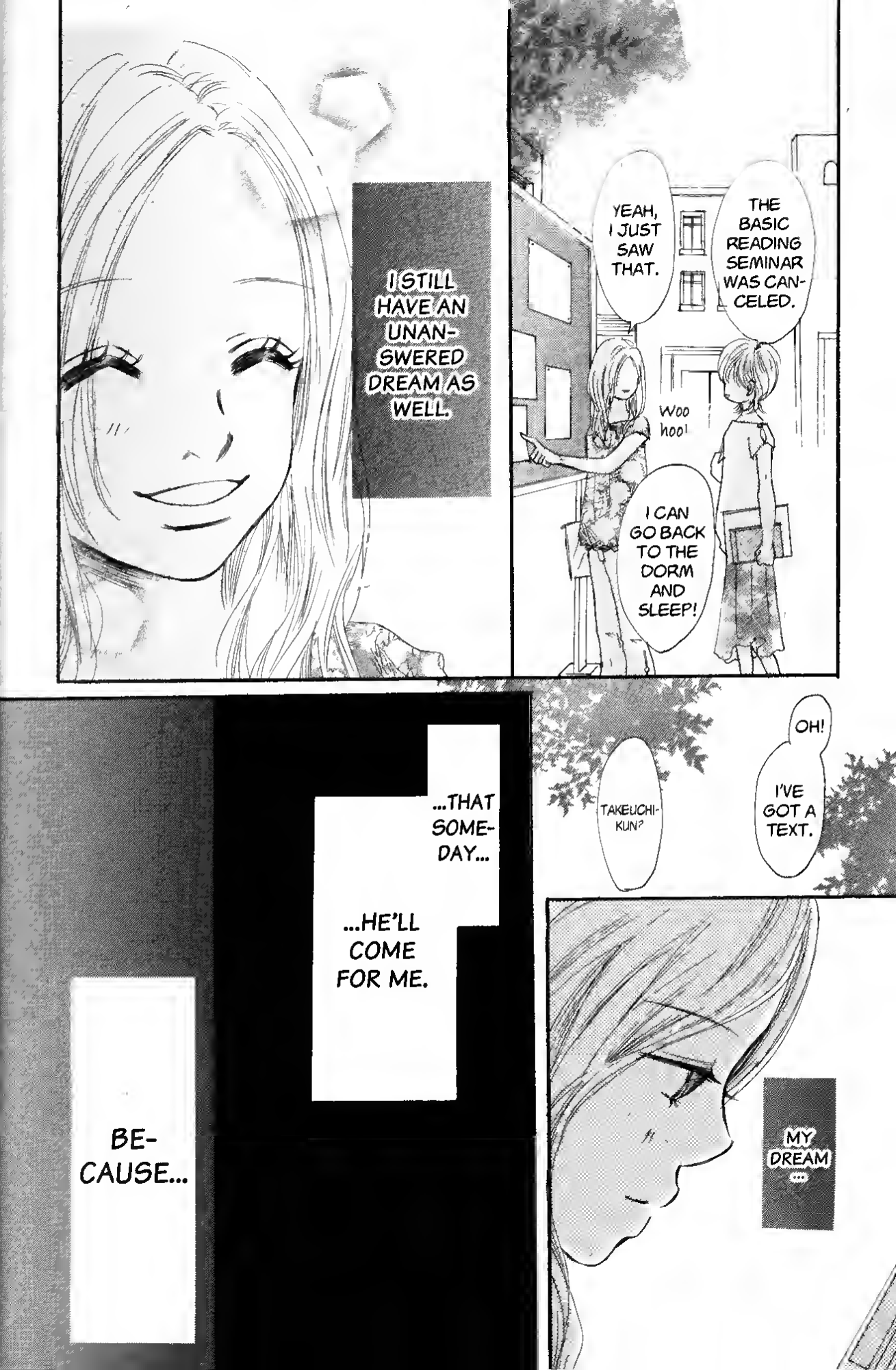


PLEASE WATCH OVER HIM.
HAVE THEM WELCOME HIS LIVELINESS AND WIT...
HAVE THE PEOPLE HE MEETS BE KIND TO HIM...
NO MATTER HOW MANY TIMES HE CRIES, OR HOW OFTEN HE'S STRUCK DOWN, GIVE HIM THE STRENGTH TO STAND AGAIN.
...HE'LL KEEP GOING AND NOT GIVE UP.
SO THAT NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS...
PROTECT HIM FOR ME.
PLEASE...
GOD...

...MY PRAYER.
THAT WAS...

AT THE TIME, HE WAS 15 YEARS OLD.
EVER SINCE THAT DAY WHEN HE WAS 15...
HE MAY ALWAYS HAVE BEEN...
...PURSUING A SINGLE DREAM.
THAT DAY THAT CAN NEVER RETURN.
HE'LL TRY...
AND FAIL...
AND TRY AGAIN...
AT 17, HE STILL BELIEVES IN IT.
BUT AT 18...
HE WILL FIND HIMSELF ENTIRELY ALONE.

I TURN 21 THIS YEAR.
NANA!
HOW COULD ANY-ONE BLAME HIM?
THE REALITY HE MUST FACE...
...IS FAR GREATER THAN YOUTH WILL ALLOW.


I STILL HAVE AN UNANSWERED DREAM AS WELL.
YEAH, I JUST SAW THAT.
THE BASIC READING SEMINAR WAS CANCELED.
Woo hoo!
I CAN GO BACK TO THE DORM AND SLEEP!
TAKEUCHI-KUN?
OH! I'VE GOT A TEXT.
MY DREAM...
...THAT SOMEDAY...
...HE'LL COME FOR ME.
BECAUSE...

...THAT DAY...
...WAS THE LAST TIME I SAW YANO.

Notes

Honorifics

In Japan, people are usually addressed by their name followed by a suffix. The suffix shows familiarity or respect, depending on the relationship.
Male (familiar): first or last name + kun
Female (familiar): first or last name + chan
Adult (polite): last name + san
Upperclassman (polite): last name + senpai
Teacher or professional: last name + sensei
Close friends or lovers: first name only, no suffix

Nana-chan vs. Nana-san

Nanami's nickname is "Nana-chan." Yano's ex-girlfriend was a year older, so she was known as "Nana-san."

Terms

Two hundred thousand yen is around two thousand U.S. dollars.
The "Doto area" refers to the eastern area of Hokkaido.

I'm currently discussing moving to the south with a friend from my hometown. Preferably somewhere I can see the sea.

—Yuki Obata

Yuki Obata's birthday is January 9. Her debut manga, *Raindrops*, won the Shogakukan Shinjin Comics Taisho Kasaku Award in 1998. Her current series, *We Were There* (*Bokura ga Ita*), won the 50th Shogakukan Manga Award and was adapted into an animated television series. She likes sweets, coffee, drinking with friends, and scary stories. Her hobby is browsing in bookshops.